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Author(s): Caterina Bori

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A new source for the biography of Ibn Taymiyya¹

CATERINA BORI

The present article introduces a new manuscript source for the study of the relationship between Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328)² and his traditionalist Shāfiʿī disciple Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1347–48).³ It is divided into three sections: the first part will discuss the content of the manuscript in relation to the biographical literature on Ibn Taymiyya; the second will present the edition of the Arabic text; and the third will consist of the annotated translation of that text. The aim of the article is to present the manuscript and its contents and to give a synthetic overview of some of the topics related to it.⁴

I

The text

The source which forms the object of this study is a brief biography of the much celebrated Ḥanbalī jurist and theologian, Ibn Taymiyya, as written by al-Dhahabī himself. It still lies in manuscript form and, so far as I know, it has not been used or quoted in any modern study on Ibn Taymiyya or al-Dhahabī.⁵

The manuscript in question is part of the *Majmūʿ* 3128 (*ʿĀm*) which is preserved in the national library of Damascus, Maktabat al-Asad, and was once part of the Zāhiriyya collection. The text has no title, but following the first line, which begins with: ...*hādhihi nubdha min sīrat shaykh al-islām Taqī l-Dīn ibn Taymiyya* ... I will refer to it as *Nubdha*. For a description of the manuscript the reader should refer to Part II of the article; this section will deal mostly with its contents, with what the sources have to say about it, and with the information the *Nubdha* conveys to us.

With this in mind, one should try and trace back in the sources, contemporary to and more recent than al-Dhahabī, some information about the text. After having skimmed through as many lists of al-Dhahabī's works as

¹ The paper draws on parts of a research project carried out for a PhD dissertation (1998–2001) at the University of Rome, 'La Sapienza': *Una lettura del personaggio Ibn Taymiyya: analisi delle fonti classiche della sua biografia*. My acknowledgements go to Professor Walid al-Ḥāfiẓ for kindly revising the Arabic text and to Dr Roberto Tottoli for reading a first draft of the article and commenting upon it.

² The literature concerning the life and work of Ibn Taymiyya is very extensive. The most comprehensive general works about him are the classic: H. Laoust, *Essai sur les Doctrines Sociales et Politiques de Taqī-d-Dīn Aḥmad b. Taymiyya* (Recherches d'Archéologie, de Philologie et d'Histoire. Cairo: Imprimerie de l'Institut français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1939); V. Makari, *Ibn Taymiyya's Ethics. The Social Factor* (American Academy of Religion, Academy Series 34, Chicago: Scholars Press, 1983); M. Abū Zahra, *Ibn Taymiyya: Ḥayātu-hu wa-ʿaṣru-hu wa-fiqhu-hu* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr, 1952).

³ For his biography see M. Ben Cheneb and J. De Somogyi, art. 'al-Dhahabī' in *Encyclopédie de l'Islam, Nouvelle Edition (EF)*, ed. H. A. R. Gibb, J. H. Kramers, E. Lévi-Provençal, J. Schacht *et al.* (Leiden and Paris: E. J. Brill, 1960–), II, 221–22 and J. de Somogyi, 'The Ta'rikh al-Islām of adh-Dhahabī' in *JRAS*, 60, 1932, pt. IV, 819–23.

⁴ Many issues are dealt with in more depth in: C. Bori, *Ibn Taymiyya: una vita esemplare. Analisi delle fonti classiche della sua biografia* (Supplemento no. 1 alle Rivista degli Studi orientali, vol. LXXVI. Pisa-Roma: Istituti editoriali e poligrafici internazionali, 2003).

⁵ Even the editors of the latest collection of biographical material on Ibn Taymiyya do not seem to be acquainted with the text. See M. 'Uzayr Shams and M. al-Imrān, *Jāmi' li-sīrat shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyya (Jāmi')* (Mecca: Dar 'Ālam al-Fawā'id, 1420H.), 203–19.

possible,⁶ one can see that the *Nubdha* is not mentioned in any of them. Fortunately, the historian Ibn al-Wardī (d. 749/1349)⁷ comes to the rescue by providing us with an invaluable piece of information when, at the end of his biographical notice of Ibn Taymiyya, he writes:

this is the excerpt (*nubdha*) of an abridged biography (*min tarjamat al-shaykh mukhtaṣara*) of Ibn Taymiyya, most of it comes from *al-Durra al-yatīmiyya fī l-sīra al-taymiyya* by the imām al-Ḥāfiẓ Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Dhahabī.⁸

In this way we are informed of the existence of both a biography of Ibn Taymiyya written by al-Dhahabī and entitled *al-Durra al-yatīmiyya fī l-sīra al-taymiyya*, and of an abridged version. Ibn al-Wardī is the only author to record such a title, which also does not appear in the lists of al-Dhahabī's works. He states that the source he has referred to is the summarized version of *al-Durra al-yatīmiyya fī l-sīra al-taymiyya*, which may be identified with the *Nubdha* on the basis of a content analysis. In fact, by a comparative reading of the two texts it will become clear that the material in Ibn al-Wardī's biography corresponds to that of our manuscript even if, as he himself admits, he tends to report it more succinctly.⁹

A part of the *Nubdha* seems to have been written when Ibn Taymiyya was still alive. The use of the temporal adverb *al-ān* is indicative of this. The adverb occurs three times: on the first occasion it refers to the number of works Ibn Taymiyya has *so far* (*ilā l-ān*) composed,¹⁰ but this is not so relevant to our purpose; the second and third instances are instead more significant. On these occasions al-Dhahabī says:

- (a) For some years now he has not issued legal opinions according to a specific doctrine, but rather according to the evidence that supports his position¹¹

⁶ The following lists have been consulted: Ibn Hajar, *al-Durar al-kāmina fī a'yān al-mī'a al-thāmina* (DK), ed. 'Abd al-Wārith Muḥammad 'Alī et al. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1997–98), III, 204–05; Al-Subki, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-shāfi'iyya* (TSh), (Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-Husayniyya al-Miṣriyya, n.d.), V, 217; Al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfi bi-l-wafayāt*, ed. S. Dederling (Bibliotheca Islamica, Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1981), II, 163–4. Ibn Qāḍi Shuhba, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-shāfi'iyya*, ed. al-Ḥāfiẓ 'Abd al-'Alim Khān, (Hyderabad: Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif al-'Uthmāniyya, 1979), III, 70–72 does not give a list of al-Dhahabī's works. Ibn al-Wardī, *Ta'rikh Ibn al-Wardī* (Cairo: Maṭba'at Jam'iyyat al-Ma'ārif, 1868–69), II, 349–78; Al-Kutubī, *Fawāt bi-l-wafayāt*, ed. M. Muḥyī l-Dīn 'Abd al-Hāmid (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahda al-Miṣriyya, 1951), II, 371–2. Al-Husaynī, *Dhayl 'alā ṭabaqāt al-huffāz*, ed. Hisām al-Dīn al-Qudṣī (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, n.d.), 35. Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya* (BN) (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Sa'āda, 1932–39), XIV, 225. Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-nihāya fī ṭabaqāt al-qurrā*, ed. G. Bergstrasser (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Sa'āda, 1932–33), II, 71 offers no list of al-Dhahabī's works. Al-Suyūṭī, *Dhayl 'alā ṭabaqāt al-huffāz*, ed. Hisām al-Dīn al-Qudṣī (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, n.d.), 347–48. Al-Nu'aymī, *al-Dāris fī ta'rikh al-madāris*, ed. Sh. al-Ḥassanī (Damascus: Maṭba'at al-Taraqqi, 1948–51), I, 79. Ibn al-Imād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab fī akhbār man dhahaba* (ShDh) (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-Tijāriyya, reprint 1979), VI, 155–6. The *Nubdha* is not quoted in the list of al-Dhahabī's manuscripts compiled by Ṣalāh al-Dīn al-Munajjid in his edition of *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1956), I, 31–5. See also C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der Arabischen Literatur* (GAL) (Leiden: E. J. Brill, vv. I–II, 1949, Supplementband (S) I, 1937; II, 1938; III, 1942), S, II, 45–7 and Sa'id al-Afghānī, 'Ibn Ḥazm fī siyar al-nubalā' in *Majallat al-majma' al-'ilmi al-'arabī*, 16/9, 1941, 393–4. Al-Zirikli, *Al-A'lām. Qāmūs tarājim li-ashhar al-rijāl wa-l-nisā' min al-'arab wa-l-musta'ribin wa-l-mustashriqīn* (Beirut: Dār al-'Ilm li-l-Malāyin, 1979), V, 326.

⁷ For biographical details see M. Ben Cheneb, art. 'Ibn al-Wardī', in: *EP*, III, 991. Ibn Hajar, *DK*, III, 115–16. Ibn Qāḍi Shuhba, *TSh*, III, 58–59. Ibn al-Imād, *ShDh*, VI, 161–2.

⁸ Ibn al-Wardī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 389. The same title is reported by Ismā'il Bāshā l-Baghādādi, *Hādīyyat al-'arifīn. Asmā' al-mu'allifīn wa-ātār al-muṣannifīn* (Istanbul, 1951), II, 154 and idem., *Iqāh al-maknūn* (Baghdad, 1945), I, 462.

⁹ For further details see the Arabic text and footnotes.

¹⁰ al-Dhahabī, *Nubdha*, fol. 72v.

¹¹ al-Dhahabī, *Nubdha*, fol. 72r.

and:

- (b) now he gives lectures and teaches religious science. He does not issue legal opinions other than verbally and says: 'I cannot conceal knowledge'.¹²

The two excerpts quoted above set the discourse into the time when the author was acquainted with Ibn Taymiyya. The impression of a concomitance between (at least) these parts of the text and Ibn Taymiyya's life is further corroborated by his main biographer, his faithful pupil Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī (d. 744/1343–44).¹³ Despite the apologetic character of his master's biography, Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī is an accurate scholar in quoting his sources. Thus, he reports passage b above as part of the events that took place during the year 718/1318–19, when Ibn Taymiyya's controversial opinions on triple divorce led to the prohibition of *fatwā* giving and earned him a new trial.¹⁴ It is again Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī who strengthens the impression that part of the content of the *Nubdha* is set in a period prior to Ibn Taymiyya's death when he writes:

In another passage in which he [i.e. al-Dhahabī] mentioned a long biography of the *shaykh* [written] long before he died, he said: ...¹⁵

He then goes on quoting ff. 71r–72v of the *Nubdha*.¹⁶

Yet, the *Nubdha* not only ends with the description of Ibn Taymiyya's funeral, that must necessarily have been written after 728/1327–28 (the year of his demise), but contains many passages that clearly refer to events that took place before the text was written down. Similarly, al-Dhahabī quotes some of the early works composed by Ibn Taymiyya as well as some which were written in the last decade of his life. This seems to suggest that when the author speaks as if his subject were alive, it must refer to his last years.

Various explanations can be given for this situation, although they can only be taken as tentative suggestions. One may attempt to conclude that the author wrote during different periods of Ibn Taymiyya's life, despite the fact that it is not easy to detect or distinguish eventual different stages of composition from the text. Or it could be assumed that al-Dhahabī wrote up his text over a long period of time, and that he composed it by collecting different materials from the various biographical notices he had dedicated to his master.¹⁷ Then again, perhaps another person, for example the anonymous copyist, patched the text together by picking from different writings by al-Dhahabī. The repetition of some elements, such as the physical description of

¹² al-Dhahabī, *Nubdha*, fol. 74r. Ibn Taymiyya's words recall a tradition in which Muhammad condemns to hell whoever conceals knowledge when asked for it. Cf. Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, ed. al-Bābī l-Halabī (Cairo, 1895), II, 263, 296, 305, 344, 353, 495, 499, 508. Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, ed. M. F. 'Abd al-Bāqī (Cairo: Dār Ihyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabīyya, 1952), I, *Muqaddima*, bāb 24, 96–8. Abū Da'ūd, *Sunan* (Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-Tāziyya, 1928), II, *Kitāb al-'Ilm* (24), bāb 9. Al-Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmi' al-Ṣāḥih*, M. F. 'Abd al-Bāqī (Cairo: al-Bābī l-Halabī, 1962), V, *Kitāb al-'Ilm* (39) bāb 3.

¹³ For a biographical note cf. H. Laoust, 'Le hanbalisme sous les Mamlouks bahrides' in *Revue des Etudes Islamiques* 28, 1960, 66.

¹⁴ Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī, *al-'Uqūd al-durriyya min manāqib shaykh al-Islām Aḥmad b. Taymiyya*, ed. M. Ḥ. Fiḡī (Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-Hijāzī, 1938), 325.

¹⁵ Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī, *'Uqūd*, 24.

¹⁶ Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī, *'Uqūd*, 24–5.

¹⁷ The following works by al-Dhahabī contain notices about Ibn Taymiyya: *Thalāth tarājim nafīsa min kitāb dhayl ta'rikh al-Islām*, ed. M. Nāṣir al-'Ajāmī (Kuwayt: Dār Ibn al-Athīr, 1995), 21–7; *Tadhkirat al-huffāz* (Hyderabad: Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif al-'Uthmāniyya, 1958), I, 1496–8; *Mu'jam al-shuyūkh. Al-Mu'jam al-kabīr*, ed. M. al-Ḥabīb al-Hindī (al-Tā'if: Maktabat al-Siddīq, 1988), I, 56–7; *al-Mu'jam al-mukhtaṣṣ*, ed. M. al-Ḥabīb al-Hindī (al-Tā'if: Maktabat al-Siddīq, 1988), 24–6; *Dhayl al-'ibar* (Kuwayt: Silsilat al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1970), 157–8. Further material has been collected in *Jāmi'*, 205–19.

Ibn Taymiyya, which occurs twice, may favour this last hypothesis. It is my opinion that at this stage of the research, and exclusively on the basis of a content analysis, it is difficult to go much further.

The significance of the Nubdha

In terms of the relevance of the manuscript, two issues in particular should be stressed. First, the *Nubdha* is a major source for some of the main biographers of Ibn Taymiyya. As a consequence, not all of its content will appear to be new to the reader's eyes. Yet the fact that the *Nubdha* was a widely quoted text among the early biographers of Ibn Taymiyya provides us with a useful check on the accuracy of those scholars with regard to their sources; the way in which they quote it and what they choose to quote or omit, can be a useful tool in detecting the biographer's attitude towards his subject.

Secondly, the *Nubdha* is an interesting text for the opinions that al-Dhahabī expresses about Ibn Taymiyya. It goes without saying that, in order to be properly evaluated, these opinions are to be related to the other judgements uttered by al-Dhahabī about his master. The text of the *Nubdha* is somewhat lacking in historical information concerning the life of Ibn Taymiyya,¹⁸ however, and does not contain the amount of detail that can be found in contemporary Syrian historians such as al-Jazari (d. 739/1338–39),¹⁹ al-Birzālī (d. 739/1338–39),²⁰ al-Yūnīnī (d. 726/1325–26),²¹ Ibn Kathīr (d. 775/1373–74),²² and the Egyptians al-Nuwayrī (d. 732/1331–32)²³ and Ibn Dawādārī (d. c. 736/1336),²⁴ or a well-documented biographer like Ibn 'Abd

¹⁸ For an introduction to the historiographical material on Ibn Taymiyya see D. P. Little, *An Introduction to Mamlūk Historiography. An Analysis of Arabic Annalistic and Biographical Sources for the Reign of al-Malik an-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalā'ūn* (Freiburg Islamstudien, Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1970) and Bori, *Ibn Taymiyya: una vita esemplare*, ch. 1, 47–56.

¹⁹ al-Jazari is the author of a chronicle entitled *Ta'rikh ḥawādith al-zamān wa-anbā'i-hi wa-wafayāt al-akābir wa-l-a'yān min abnā'i-hi: al-ma'rūf bi-Ta'rikh Ibn al-Jazari*, 3 vv., ed. 'U.'A.S. al-Tadmuri (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-'Aṣriyya, 1998). The first volume deals with the years 689–99/1290–1300 and its contents were summarized in French by J. Sauvaget, *La Chronique de Damas d'al-Jazari (Années 689–698)* (Paris, 1949). U. Haarman, *Quellen zur frühen Mamlukenzeit*, (Freiburg: D. Robischon, 1969) has edited the years 682–87/1283–88. The second volume covers the period from 725/1324 to 732/1332, the third covers 733/1332 to 738/1338. Li Guo has accurately reviewed al-Tadmuri's edition in *Mamlūk Studies Review* 5, 2001, 211ff. On the importance and originality of al-Jazari see also: Haarman, 'L'édition de la chronique mamelouke syrienne de Šams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Ġazari' in: *BEO XXVII*, 1974, 196–203; and D. P. Little, *Introduction*, 96. For his biography cf. A. Z. Bazmee, art. 'al-Djazarī', in *EF*, II, 535–6; Haarman, *Quellen*, 12–13; Little, *Introduction*, 53–4; L. Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, (Stuttgart: O. Harrassowitz, 1998), 42–3.

²⁰ See F. Rosenthal, art. 'al-Birzālī' in *EF*, I, 1238–9 and Little, *Introduction*, 46 for al-Birzālī's biography. Al-Birzālī is the author of *al-Muqtafā li-Ta'rikh al-shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn Abī Shāma*. Topkapısaray, Ahmet III, Ms 2951. Cf. Little, *Introduction*, 46–53. I did not have the chance to consult the manuscript. All the material concerning Ibn Taymiyya extant in *al-Muqtafā* is supposed to have been extracted, edited and presented in *Jāmi'*, 149–62. To the same historian belongs also a chronicle of Damascus which bears the title of *Ta'rikh al-Birzālī*, Ms Leiden, Or 3098 a–b.

²¹ For the biography of Qutb al-Dīn Mūsā l-Yūnīnī cf. Ibn Rajab, *al-Dhayl 'alā ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābila*, ed. M. Fiḡī (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Sunna al-Muhammadiyya, 1953), II, 379–80; Ibn al-'Imād, *ShDh*, VI, 73; Ibn Kathīr, *BN*, XIV, 126; Little, *Introduction*, 57; Li Guo, *Early Mamluk Syrian Historiography*. Al-Yūnīnī's *Dhayl Mir'at al-zamān*, ed. Li Guo (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1998), II, 6–21.

²² About Ibn Kathīr's biography and Ibn Kathīr as a historian see the articles of H. Laoust, 'Ibn Kaṭīr historien' in *Arabica* II, 1955, 42–88; and art. 'Ibn Kathīr' in *EF*, III, 841–2. Cf. also the biographical notices in Ibn Hajar, *DK*, I, 218 and Ibn al-'Imād, *ShDh*, VI, 231.

²³ For biographical details see Little, *Introduction*, 24. M. Chapoutot-Remadi, art. 'al-Nuwayrī' in *EF*, VIII, 158–60.

²⁴ On his biography and his work cf. Haarman, *Quellen*, 61–84; Little, *Introduction*, 10–18; B. Lewis, art. 'Ibn Dawādārī', in *EF*, III, 767; Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 47–8. His biography/chronicle of the Sultan has been edited by H. R. Roemer: Ibn Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar wa-jāmi' al-ghurar. Al-Durr al-fākhīr fī sirat al-Malik al-Nāṣir* (Quellen zur Geschichte des islamischen Ägyptens, Cairo: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, 1960), IX.

al-Hādī. One detail is worthy of note, though: the *Nubdha* seems to be the first source that records two meetings, and not one, between Ibn Taymiyya and the Mongol Ilkhān Ghāzān (d. 703/1304).²⁵

Let us turn now to the first point: the *Nubdha* as a source.

Two of Ibn Taymiyya's main biographers make very frequent use of the *Nubdha*; they are Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī, mentioned above, and the later Ibn Rajab (d. 795/1392), author of the *Dhayl 'alā ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābila*. The former wrote a long monograph on his master, the latter included a rather lengthy biographical note in his collective dictionary.²⁶ Other biographers generally refer to al-Dhahabī as their main source about the Ḥanbalī *faqīh*, but do not necessarily derive it from the *Nubdha*. We are talking in particular about al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1362–63)²⁷ and Ibn Ḥajar (d. 852/1448)²⁸ who quote from the *tarjama* (biography) of Ibn Taymiyya included in the *Dhayl kitāb ta'rikh al-Islām*.²⁹

Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī was indeed a loyal disciple of Ibn Taymiyya. This is shown in the way in which he refers to al-Dhahabī. He usually quotes long passages from the *Nubdha* praising Ibn Taymiyya's moral qualities, his courage and his stunning intellectual endowments; he also reports a brief account of his trials in Cairo and Damascus, but tends to omit al-Dhahabī's rather sharp comments on his master's personality.³⁰ In so doing he cleans Ibn Taymiyya's image of every dissonant element, presenting a picture that faithfully sticks to the best ideals of Islamic moral representation.³¹

Ibn Rajab, meanwhile, does not restrain himself from reporting some of the *Nubdha*'s most critical remarks about Ibn Taymiyya's off-putting temper, his aggressive mood and his uncongenial mood swings.³² This is not surprising. If we glance through the whole text of his biography we soon notice that Ibn Rajab does not confine himself to praise, but expresses some reservations about Ibn Taymiyya's reputedly excessive zeal in polemicizing against ascetics, speculative theologians and philosophers as well as against some important imams.³³ Ibn Rajab also seems openly to disregard Ibn Taymiyya, taking

²⁵ al-Dhahabī, *Nubdha*, fol. 72r. On this specific issue see Y. Michot, *Lettre à un Roi Croisé. Traduction de l'Arabe, Introduction, Notes et Lexique* (Sagesse musulmane, Lyon: Bruylant-Academia; Louvain-La-Neuve: Tawhid, 1995), 74–8 and Bori, *Ibn Taymiyya: una vita esemplare*, ch. 2, 99–108.

²⁶ Ibn Rajab, *Dhayl*, II, 397–408.

²⁷ Cf. F. Rosenthal, art. 'al-Ṣafadī', in *EF*, VII, 783–5; D. Little, 'al-Ṣafadī as a biographer of his contemporaries', in D. Little (ed.), *Essays on Islamic Civilization* (Leiden: E. J. Brill), 1976, 206–10; J. Van Ess, 'Ṣafadī-Splitter' in *Der Islam* 53, 1976, 242–66 and 54, 1977, 77–108.

²⁸ For biographical details see F. Rosenthal, art. 'Ibn Ḥajar' in *EF*, III, 807.

²⁹ The manuscript has not been edited yet except for the biographies of Ibn Taymiyya, al-Dhahabī and al-Mizzī (d. 742/1341): Al-Dhahabī, *Thalāth tarājim nafīsa*. It is preserved in the Oriental Collection of Leiden University library: Al-Dhahabī, *Kitāb ḍayl ta'rikh al-Islām wa-ṭabaqāt al-mashāhir wa-l-a'lām*, Ms Leiden, Or 320 (2). It is a continuation of *al-Ta'rikh al-kabīr* for the years 701–40/1301–39. The copyist 'Abd al-Wahhāb ibn 'Abd al-Mu'min al-Qurayshī (d. ?) has extended it up to 750/1349. The work is a collection of lives of renowned men and women. For a description cf. M. J. De Goeje and Th. Juynboll, *Catalogus codicum arabicorum (CCA)* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1907), II, 22–3.

³⁰ Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī quotes from the *Nubdha* in: 'Uqūd, 4–5 = *Nubdha*, fol. 71v. 'Uqūd, 24–5 = *Nubdha*, ff. 71v–72r. 'Uqūd, 116–18 = *Nubdha*, ff. 72v–73v. 'Uqūd, 195–8 = *Nubdha*, ff. 73v–74v.

³¹ On biography as a means of conveying moral standards, i.e. a moral paradigm, see in particular the study by N. Hurvitz on Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855) as depicted by his son Ṣāliḥ (d. 266/879–80) and the bibliography therein: 'Biography and mild ascetism: a study on Islamic moral imagination' in *Studia Islamica (SI)* 85, 1997/1, 41–65 and idem., *The Formation of Hanbalism. Piety into Power* (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002).

³² Ibn Rajab, *Dhayl*, II, 394–95, quotes from al-Dhahabī, *Nubdha*, ff. 72r–74r, although he selects and presents passages in a different order from that in the *Nubdha*.

³³ Ibn Rajab, *Dhayl*, II, 394, ll. 1–8.

an isolated stand on what he calls 'some irregular issues' (*bi-ba'ḍ shudhūdh al-masā'il*).³⁴

What is interesting is that two prominent members of the Damascus Hanbalī community, who lived roughly fifty years apart, display a very different attitude towards its most prominent representative, as if to express a lack of consensus about this figure within local Hanbalism. Moving one step further, one may question how far the Damascene *ḥanābila*, contemporary to and after Ibn Taymiyya, identified their affiliation to Hanbalism with the works and deeds of Ibn Taymiyya.³⁵ Ibn Rajab seems to reveal a certain uneasiness which will be confirmed, as we shall see, by al-Dhahabī's attitude, although the latter was not properly a *Hanbalī*, but still a staunch traditionalist; a topic which is deserving of further research.

As for the second point, let us examine briefly the structure and content of the *Nubdha*. As is typical of Islamic biographies, the *Nubdha* does not follow a chronological order, but rather tends to organize the information thematically. Like any other biography of Ibn Taymiyya, it displays a cluster of common information: his full name,³⁶ his birth date and death date,³⁷ some honorific titles,³⁸ the escape from Ḥarrān to Damascus,³⁹ his outstanding moral and intellectual qualities,⁴⁰ his teachers' names,⁴¹ the titles of some of his works,⁴² and a brief account of his trials (*miḥan*)⁴³ and of his funeral.⁴⁴

Al-Dhahabī's text combines such conventional data with a hint of a personal touch. For example, he describes his master physically⁴⁵ and informs the reader of Ibn Taymiyya's celibacy and his mediocrity in composing poetry. Both of these assertions are unexpected, especially the latter, and give the impression that al-Dhahabī is in some way trying to undermine his master's moral and intellectual credibility.⁴⁶ Finally, he expresses a series of critical remarks, which again sound somewhat peculiar for a biography written by a firmly traditionalist disciple of his.

Al-Dhahabī's criticism concerns both Ibn Taymiyya's bad character and his work. With regard to his character, al-Dhahabī describes him as being frequently tactless and argumentative, as much able to honour as insult his companion.⁴⁷ In describing the attitude of different groups towards Ibn

³⁴ Ibn Rajab, *Dhayl*, II, 394, ll. 9–10. Here *shādh* is to be intended as a 'non-canonical' opinion in antithesis to *mashhūr*, which is a rule generally accepted by the majority of scholars. Most likely, Ibn Rajab is polemically hinting at the dispute on triple divorce (*al-talāq al-thalāth*) and conditional divorce (*ta'liq al-talāq*).

³⁵ Concerning Hanbalism in Damascus between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries cf. Laoust, 'Le hanbalisme sous les Mamlouks bahrides', 1–71. L. Pouzet, *Damas au VI^e/XIII^e s. Vie et Structure Religieuses dans une métropole islamique* (Collection Recherches: Langue Arabe et Pensée Islamique, Beirut: Dar el-Machreq, Sarl Éditeurs, 1991³), 80–96. M. Cook, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 145–63.

³⁶ al-Dhahabī, *Nubdha*, fol. 70r.

³⁷ al-Dhahabī, *Nubdha*, fol. 70r and 76v.

³⁸ al-Dhahabī, *Nubdha*, fol. 70r.

³⁹ al-Dhahabī, *Nubdha*, fol. 70r.

⁴⁰ al-Dhahabī, *Nubdha*, ff. 71v–73v, then *passim*.

⁴¹ al-Dhahabī, *Nubdha*, ff. 70r–71v.

⁴² al-Dhahabī, *Nubdha*, fol. 72v.

⁴³ al-Dhahabī, *Nubdha*, ff. 73v–74r–75r–76v.

⁴⁴ al-Dhahabī, *Nubdha*, fol. 76v.

⁴⁵ al-Dhahabī, *Nubdha*, fol. 73v (quoted by Ibn al-Wardī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 389, ll. 18–19) and fol. 76v (quoted by Ibn Rajab, *Dhayl*, II, 395, ll. 19–20).

⁴⁶ al-Dhahabī, *Nubdha*, fol. 74r. For a more sophisticated analysis of these two topics see Bori, *Ibn Taymiyya: una vita esemplare*, ch. 2, 70–72 and 82–6. Little has been the first scholar to comment on the oddness of Ibn Taymiyya's celibacy: 'Did Ibn Taymiyya have a screw loose?' in *SI* XLI, 1975, 105.

⁴⁷ al-Dhahabī, *Nubdha*, fol. 73v, quoted by Ibn Rajab, *Dhayl*, II, 395.

Taymiyya, he writes: 'there are people among his opponents who believe in him and in his science, but say: "In him there is fickleness, haste, irascibility and love for leadership"''.⁴⁸

These features are also reflected in his assessment of the master's work, which is characterized, according to him, by polemics and a dangerous 'originality' that turned into isolating and daring positions against the scholars' *ijmā'*.⁴⁹ Thus, al-Dhahabī ends up expressing his open disapproval of Ibn Taymiyya's opinions on divorce by saying: 'he controlled himself in a strange way and held firm to his own opinion'.⁵⁰

In all the picture that emerges is not so exciting. Nevertheless, if set into a broader context, al-Dhahabī's words prove to be consistent, as on different occasions he restates the same view about Ibn Taymiyya.

In a brief work entitled *Bayān zaghal al-'ilm* al-Dhahabī describes Ibn Taymiyya in a similar way to that of the *Nubdha*. That is, he acknowledges his great scholarly value and intelligence, his moderation in dress, appetite and women as well as his efforts for truth and *jihād*, but declares that the reasons for the strong opposition to him were his insolence and vanity, his excessive fondness of trying to outdo his fellow *shaykhs*, his contempt for influential people, his pretensions, and love of ostentation.⁵¹

Another source further strengthens this picture of al-Dhahabī's attitude. This is a letter written by al-Dhahabī to Ibn Taymiyya, apparently at the end of the latter's life, and entitled *Golden Advice to Ibn Taymiyya (al-Naṣiḥa al-dhahabiyya li-Ibn Taymiyya)*.⁵² The advice takes the form of an open-hearted reproach to Ibn Taymiyya for his excessive engagement in sterile polemics rather than devoting himself to the fundamental issues of Islamic theology and jurisprudence, and for his arrogance and lack of tact in dealing with his fellow 'ulamā'. The tone of the letter is at times sarcastic, at times merely severe: at its core stands a message of sound criticism of Ibn Taymiyya's self-centredness.

I have dealt elsewhere with the possible reasons for the clash between al-Dhahabī and Ibn Taymiyya.⁵³ What is important to recall here is that the *Nubdha*, the *Naṣiḥa*, and the rest of the critical opinions uttered by al-Dhahabī about Ibn Taymiyya, all seem to reflect an embarrassment on al-Dhahabī's part in being affiliated to him. A closer look at biographies and chronicles does in fact show how busy the Ḥanbalī *faqīh* had been in trying to control influential teaching posts in Damascus in the name of his 'group' (*tā'ifa*) and how deeply he had been involved in local strife between 'ulamā'.⁵⁴ The difficult position in which Ibn Taymiyya found himself in Damascus at the end of his

⁴⁸ al-Dhahabī, *Nubdha*, fol. 75v.

⁴⁹ al-Dhahabī, *Nubdha*, fol. 74r.

⁵⁰ *ibid.*

⁵¹ al-Dhahabī, *Bayān zaghal al-'ilm wa-l-talab*, ed. M. Z. al-Kawtharī (Damascus: Maṭba'at al-Tawfīq, 1347H.), 17–18. The passage is also quoted by al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ilān bi-tawbīkh li-man dhamma l-ta'rikh*, ed. M. Z. al-Kawtharī (Damascus: Maktabat al-Qudsi, 1349H.), 77 and by D. P. Little, 'Did Ibn Taymiyya have a screw loose?', 102–03.

⁵² al-Dhahabī, *al-Naṣiḥa al-dhahabiyya li-Ibn Taymiyya*, in *Bayān zaghal al-'ilm*, 32–4. The issue of authenticity has been dealt with by Little, 'Did Ibn Taymiyya have a screw loose?', 102; and Bori, *Ibn Taymiyya: una vita esemplare*, ch. 4, 142–8 and 191–4.

⁵³ Bori, *Ibn Taymiyya: una vita esemplare*, *ibid.*

⁵⁴ Bori, *Ibn Taymiyya: una vita esemplare*. About knowledge as a source of social power and the struggles for it see the interesting book by M. Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190–1350* (Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

life might have damaged the career of some of his close pupils, like al-Dhahabī, who from the *Nubdha* appears to be striving to maintain a balanced position between praise and admiration on the one hand, and detachment by means of a safe criticism on the other.⁵⁵

Concluding remarks

In brief, much of the early biographical literature about Ibn Taymiyya quotes al-Dhahabī as its main source. In fact, al-Dhahabī was not only a close disciple of the famous Ḥanbalī jurist and theologian, but also a renowned traditionalist scholar and a much-celebrated historian—and therefore an authoritative source. A content analysis both of the manuscript and of early biographical material has allowed us to identify the *Nubdha* as a frequently quoted source. The way in which the *Nubdha* was used by biographers helps bring to light issues concerning their relationship with the subject, which calls into question the existence of a full Ḥanbalī consensus around Ibn Taymiyya as ‘the’ representative of the Ḥanbalī community in Damascus. Similarly, the criticism expressed by al-Dhahabī towards his master confirms the existence of tensions between the two, and the former’s unease about displaying unconditional allegiance to Ibn Taymiyya’s entourage.

II

The manuscript

The text is part of a miscellany (*Majmūʿ* 3128 *ʿĀm*) preserved in the National Library of Damascus (Maktabat al-Asad) and was once part of the Zāhiriyya collection. According to the catalogue, the *Majmūʿ* comes from the Ḥanbalī madrasa *al-ʿUmariyya* and consists of seven *rasāʾil* dealing with various topics. Of these, five are attributed to Ibn Taymiyya and one, entitled *al-Ṭibb al-ruḥānī*, to Muḥammad ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1201).

The catalogue, by al-Sawwās, provides a brief and approximate description of the contents of each *risāla*; it mentions the authors, the copyists—when known—the number of folios, the width and length of the pages (14 × 17 cm) and the number of lines (16 to 23), but it fails to offer any other useful information to date the texts.⁵⁶

I was unable to consult the original copy in Damascus and I have therefore studied the photocopy from microfilm. I cannot say anything about the format of the pages. The photocopies I managed to obtain do not indicate any damage nor provide any information about the origin of the paper. Furthermore, there is neither a *colophon* nor a note that would enable me to propose or formulate a dating hypothesis.

What follows is a description of what is visible from the photocopies of the microfilm.

The whole miscellany consists of 75 ff. of which the *Nubdha* covers fol. 70r to fol 76v.⁵⁷ Pages are numbered in Arabic figures written in the centre at the bottom, apparently in pencil; there are on average 17 lines to the page. The incipit (fol. 70r) mentions the author’s name and the work genre (i.e. a biography: *wa-hādhihi nubdha min sirat...*). As stated above, the copy is not dated and the copyist’s name is not recorded. The content is introduced in the third

⁵⁵ See in particular al-Dhahabī, *Thalāth tarājim nafīsa*, 23–24, 26, 27 quoted in part by Ibn Hajar, *DK*, I, 91.

⁵⁶ Y. M. al-Sawwās, *Fihrist makhtūṭāt al-Zāhiriyya: al-Majāmiʿ* (Damascus, 1986), II, 212–15.

⁵⁷ And not to fol. 75v as according to al-Sawwās, *Fihrist, Majāmiʿ*, II, 215.

person: *qāla (al-Dhahabī)*; the excipit (fol. 76v) finishes with the formula: *rahīma-hu llāh wa-raḍīya ‘an-hu wa-raḍīya ‘an-nā bi-barakati-hi wa-ghafara la-nā ‘an-hu wa-karrama-hu* ('May God be compassionate with him, and be pleased with him and with us by His blessing. May He forgive us on his behalf and may He honour him!').

The handwriting is hasty and a very cursive *naskhī*. Diacritical points are scarce, but not completely missing, and they are not used systematically. Vocalization is also rare and when there, it does not seem to conform to any rational criteria. A catchword appears only in ff. 71 and 72, perhaps also in fol. 73 (the photocopy is not clear) at the bottom left of the page. There are no marginal notes, only on the right margin of fol. 76v (fifth line from the bottom) Ibn Taymiyya's death date is made explicit in Arabic figures.

The text is largely correct from both a grammatical and an orthographical point of view. Most of the orthographic peculiarities are to be noted in the writing of *hamza*, for which the scribe does not follow a regular spelling.

It is to be remarked that:

- (a) the *hamza* is often not written, only its carrier (*yā'*, *wāw*, *alif*). For example سئل for سئل (fol. 71r); قرأت for قرأت (fol. 71r); نكاته for نكاته (fol. 71v) ...;
- (b) when followed by a long vowel, the *hamza* in the middle of a word tends to disappear together with its carrier. For example ملوا for ملوا (fol. 73r) and الروس for الروس (fol. 76v);
- (c) the *hamza* at the end of a word that comes after an ¹ is written in different ways:
 - sometimes it is simply omitted (for example فضلاء for فضلاء [fol. 71v], علماء for علماء (fol. 72r)) ...;
 - sometimes it is omitted, but the *alif* is marked by a *madda* (أعيا for أعيا (fol. 72r), عشاء for عشاء (fol. 74r), غدا for غدا (fol. 74r));
 - once it is both written and marked by † (أبناء (fol. 74r));
- (d) as for the verb we find both جاء (fol. 73v) and جا (fol. 74v);
- (e) قرأ is once written قراء (fol. 75r) and يفجى stands once for يفجى (fol. 76v.);

furthermore:

- (f) three times the scribe drops the *yā'* of the *ism mansūb* (relative adjective) derived from the noun: شيطانية for شيطانية (fol. 75v.), الغيلانيات for الغيلانيات and رحمانى for رحمانى (fol. 75r).

it is also to be noted that:

- (g) the writing of the word ابن as part of a person's name is usually correct;
- (h) diacritical points on the *tā' marbūṭa* are not regularly employed.

The edition

1. All orthographic peculiarities appearing in the original manuscript have been adapted uniformly to the modern conventional system in order to make the text consistent and more easily readable.
2. Grammatical and lexical anomalies are few. The text being a *unicum*, I have preferred to leave the edition as close as possible to the original and suggest in the footnotes any possible emendation.
3. I did not follow the vocalization of the original manuscript. Vowels have been added only where deemed indispensable to suggest a specific reading.

4. Only once, in fol. 76v, a circle with a dot inside appears to point to the end of the text, just before the closing formula. Otherwise there are no marks. I have therefore tried to limit the insertion of punctuation signs to a minimum:
 - colon to introduce direct speech or a new source presented by al-Dhahabī (قال:.... قلت:..);
 - full stop to mark the beginning of a period to which a new narrative unit corresponds;
 - inverted commas to point out a *ḥadīth* or a quranic *āya*;
 - question mark and exclamation mark where deemed necessary to facilitate the reading of dialogues
5. The apparatus deals exclusively with textual matters. Identifications of persons (when possible), places, sources, quranic verses and traditions, etc. are to be found in the English translation. I have recorded in the footnotes the possible variants of the *Nubdha* quoted by already edited biographies of Ibn Taymiyya; namely, Ibn ‘Abd al-Hādī (عقود), Ibn al-Wardī (تاريخ), Ibn Rajab (ذيل) and Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalānī (الدرر الكامنة=دك). As stated above, Ibn al-Wardī tends to abridge al-Dhahabī’s text. Thus, I have pointed out his variants only when he takes the time to quote the *Nubdha* fully and carefully.
6. In preparing the edition the following signs have been used:
 - [] = conjectural addition of the editor.
 - + = added in one of the already edited sources.
 - = omitted in one of the already edited sources.

The translation

Just a few words about the English translation. I have tried to provide the text with the notes I thought useful to clarify it, especially when al-Dhahabī hints at people, works or events of Ibn Taymiyya’s life that may be unknown to the reader with no specialized knowledge of Ibn Taymiyya. I have not always managed to identify the characters mentioned. In translating, my main linguistic preoccupation was with tense. Assuming that some parts of the text were somehow contemporary to Ibn Taymiyya, I found myself facing a problem of temporal coherence: either being consistent with the nature of the Arabic tenses, that implied some rather sudden switches from the past to the present tense, or with the English *consecutio temporum*. I chose to remain as close as possible to the Arabic.

[نبذة من سيرة شيخ الإسلام تقي الدين ابن تيمية]¹

- [fol. 70r] الحمد لله وحده هذه نبذة من سيرة شيخ الإسلام تقي الدين ابن تيمية رضي الله عنه مما ألفه الشيخ الإمام العلامة الحافظ شمس الدين أبو عبد الله محمد بن أحمد بن عثمان الذهبي الشافعي تغمدهما الله برحمته ورضوانه قال:
- ابن تيمية تقي الدين أحمد بن عبد الحلیم بن عبد السلام بن عبد الله بن أبي القاسم الخضر بن محمد بن الخضر بن علي بن عبد الله بن تيمية الإمام الحبر البحر العلم الفرد شيخ الإسلام ونادرة العصر تقي الدين أبو العباس أحمد الحارثي الحنبلي نزيل دمشق ولد بحران يوم الاثنين عاشر ربيع الأول سنة إحدى وستين وستمئة وهاجر والده به وبإخوته إلى الشام عند جور التتار فسار بالليل بهم وبالكاتب على عجلة لعدم الدواب وكاد العدو أن يلحقهم ووقفت العجلة فابتهل إلى الله واستغاث به فنجوا وسلموا وقدموا دمشق في أثناء سنة سبع وستين فسمعوا من الزين بن عبد الدائم نسخة ابن عرفة وغير ذلك ثم سمع شيخنا الكبير من ابن أبي اليسر والكمال بن عبد والمجد بن عساكر أصحاب الخشوعي ومن الجمال ابن الصيرفي وأحمد بن أبي الخير سلامة والقاسم الإربلي والشيخ شمس الدين عبد الرحمن [fol. 71v] بن أبي عمر وأبي الغنائم بن علان وخلق كثير وسمع مسند أحمد مرات والكتب الكبار والأجزاء وعُني بالحديث ونسخ جملة صالحة وتعلم الخط والحساب في المكتب وحفظ القرآن ثم أقبل على الفقه وقرأ أياماً في العربية على ابن عبد القوي ثم فهمها وأخذ يتأمل كتاب سيبويه حتى فهمه وبرع في النحو وأقبل على التفسير إقبالاً كلياً حتى حاز فيه قصب السبق وأحكم أصول الفقه وغير ذلك هذا كله وهو بعد ما بلغ ابن بضع عشرة سنة فابتهر الفضلاء من فرط ذكائه وسيلان ذهنه وقوة حافظته وسرعة إدراكه.
- ونشأ في تصون تام وعفاف وتأله وتعبد واقتصاد في الملبس والمأكل وكان يحضر المدارس والمحافل في صغره فيتكلم² وينظر ويُفهم الكبار ويأتي بما يتحير منه أعيان البلد في العلم فأفتى وله تسع عشرة سنة بل أقل.
- وشرع في الجمع والتأليف من³ ذلك الوقت وأكب على الاشتغال ومات والده وكان من كبار الحنابلة وأئمتهم فدرّس بعده بوظائفه وله إحدى وعشرون سنة واشتهر

¹ العنوان غير موجود في الأصل، أخذناه من السطر الأول.

² ابن عبد الهادي، عقود، ٤: - فيتكلم.

أمره وبعُد صيته في العالم وأخذ في تفسير الكتاب العزيز أيام الجمع على كرسي من حفظه وكان يورد المجلس ولا يتلثم وكذا كان يورد الدرس بتودة وصوت جهوري فصيح فيقول في المجلس أزيد من كراسين أو أقل ويكتب [fol. 71r] على الفتوى في الحال عدة أوصال بخط سريع إلى غاية التغليف والإغلاق.

- قرأتُ بخط شيخنا العلامة كمال الدين علم الشافعية في حق ابن تيمية: كان إذا
 سئل عن فن من العلم ظن الرائي والسماع أنه لا يعرف غير ذلك الفن وحكم بأن [ه]
 لا يعرفه أحد مثله⁴ وكان الفقهاء من سائر الطوائف إذا جالسوه⁵ استفادوا منه في
 مذاهبهم أشياء⁶ قال: ولا يُعرف أنه ناظر أحدًا فانقطع معه ولا تكلم في علم من العلوم
 سواء⁷ كان من علوم الشرع أو غيرها إلا فاق فيه أهله⁸ واجتمعت فيه شروط الاجتهاد
 على وجهها كما يجب.

10

- قلتُ: وله خبرة تامة بالرجال وجرهم وتعديلهم وطبقاتهم ومعرفة بفنون الحديث
 والعالي والنازل وبالصحيح والسقيم مع حفظه لمتونه الذي انفرد به فلا يبلغ أحد في العصر
 رتبته ولا يقاربه وهو عجب في استحضاره واستخراج الحجج منه وإليه المنتهى في عزوه
 إلى الكتب الستة والمسند بحيث يصدق عليه أن يقال: كل حديث لا يعرفه ابن تيمية
 فليس بحديث ولكن الإحاطة لله⁹ غير أنه يغترف فيه¹⁰ من بحر وغيره من الأئمة يغترفون
 من السواقي وأما التفسير فمسلمٌ إليه وله في استحضاره لآيات¹¹ من القرآن وقت إقامة
 الدليل بها على المسألة قوة عجيبة وإذا رآه المقرئ تحير فيه ولفرط إمامته في التفسير

15

³ و في الاصل: في من. ووضع خط على الحرف الأول.

⁴ ابن عبد الهادي، عقود، ٧: وحكم أن أحدا لا يعرفه ملته.

⁵ ابن عبد الهادي، عقود، ٧: إذا جالسوا معه.

⁶ ابن عبد الهادي، عقود، ٧: استفادوا في مذاهبهم منه ما لم يكونوا يعرفوه قبل ذلك.

⁷ ابن عبد الهادي، عقود، ٧: سواء أ... أم.

⁸ ابن عبد الهادي، عقود، ٧: + والمنسوين إليه.

⁹ ابن رجب، ذيل، ٢، ٣٩١: - ولكن الإحاطة لله.

¹⁰ ابن عبد الهادي، عقود، ٢٥: - فيه.

¹¹ ابن عبد الهادي، عقود، ٢٥: وله في استحضار الآيات... ابن الوردى، تاريخ، ٢، ٣٨٧: ... وله في استحضار الآيات للاستدلال

قوة عجيبة. ابن رجب، ذيل، ٢، ٣٩١: وله من استحضار الآيات...

- وعظمة¹² اطلاعه يبين¹³ خطأ كثير¹⁴ من أقوال المفسرين ويوهي أقوالاً عديدة [fol. 72v] وينصر قولاً واحداً موافقاً لما دل عليه القرآن والحديث ويكتب في اليوم والليلة من التفسير أو من الفقه أو من الأصولين أو من الرد على الفلاسفة والأوائل نحواً من أربع كراريس أو أزيد وما أبعد أن تصانيفه إلى الآن تبلغ خمسمائة مجلدة وله في غير مسألة مصنف مفرد في مجلدة¹⁵ كمسألة التحليل ومسألة حفير ومسألة من سب الرسول ومسألة اقتضاء الصراط المستقيم في ذم البدع وله مصنف في الرد على ابن المطهر الرافضي في ثلاث مجلدات كبار ومصنف في الرد على تأسيس التقديس للرازي في سبع مجلدات وكتاب في الرد على المنطق وكتاب في الموافقة بين المعقول والمنقول في مجلدين وقد جمع أصحابه من فتاواه نحواً من ست مجلدات كبار.
- 10 وله باع طويل في معرفة مذاهب الصحابة والتابعين وقل أن يتكلم في مسألة إلا ويذكر فيها مذاهب الأئمة الأربعة وقد خالف الأربعة في مسائل معروفة وصنف فيها واحتج لها بالكتاب والسنة وله مصنف سماء السياسة الشرعية في إصلاح الراعي والرعية وكتاب رفع الملام عن الأئمة الأعلام¹⁶ ولما كان معتقلاً بالإسكندرية التمس منه صاحب سبته أن يُجيز له مرويّاته وبيّض¹⁷ على أسماء جملة منها فكتب في عشر ورقات جملة من ذلك بأسانيدها من حفظه بحيث يعجز أن يعمل [fol. 72r] بعضه أكبر محدث يكون¹⁸
- 15 وله الآن عدة سنين لايفتي [ب] مذهب معين بل بما قام الدليل عليه عنده.
- ولقد نصر السنة المحضة والطريقة السلفية واحتج لها ببراهين ومقدمات وأمور لم يُسبق إليها وأطلق عبارات أحجم عنها الأولون والآخرون وهابوا وجسر هو عليها حتى قام عليه خلق من علماء مصر والشام قياماً لا مزيد عليه وبدّعوه وناظروه وكابروه وهو ثابت لا يداهن ولا يحاجي بل يقول الحق المر الذي أدّاه¹⁹ إليه اجتهاده وحده ذهنه وسعة
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¹² ابن رجب، ذيل، ٢، ٣٩١: عظم.

¹³ ابن الوردى، تاريخ، ٢، ٣٨٧: بين.

¹⁴ ابن الوردى، تاريخ، ٢، ٣٨٧: كثيراً.

¹⁵ ابن عبد الهادي، عقود، ٢٥: + ثم ذكر بعض تصانيفه. ولم يذكرها ابن عبد الهادي إلا الموافقة بين المعقول والمنقول.

¹⁶ ولم يذكر ابن عبد الهادي هذين التصنيفين.

¹⁷ ابن عبد الهادي، عقود، ١١٧: ينص.

¹⁸ ابن عبد الهادي، عقود، ١١٧: - يكون.

¹⁹ ابن ردي، تاريخ، ٢، ٣٨٧: أدّى.

دائرته في السنن والأقوال مع ما اشتهر عنه من الورع وكمال الفكر وسرعة الإدراك والخوف من الله والتعظيم لحرمات الله²⁰ بينه وبينهم حملات حربية ووقعات²¹ شأمية ومصرية وكم من نوبة قد رموه عن قوس واحدة فينجيه الله فإنه دائم الابتهاال كثير الاستغاثة قوي التوكل ثابت الجأش له أوراد وأذكار يُدمنها بكيفية وجمعية²² وله من الطرف الآخر محبوبون من العلماء والصلحاء ومن الجند والأمراء ومن التجار والكبراء 5 وسائر العامة تحبه لأنه منتصب لنفعهم ليلاً ونهاراً بلسانه وقلمه.

وأما شجاعته فيها تُضرب الأمثال وبععضها يتشبه أكابر الأبطال فلقد أقامه الله في نوبة غازان والتقى أعباء الأمر بنفسه وقام وقعد وطلع²³ وخرج واجتمع بالملك²⁴ مرتين وبقطلو شاه ومولاء²⁵ وكان قبجق يتعجب من إقدامه [fol.73v] وجرأته على المغول.

وله حدة قوية تعتريه في البحث حتى كأنه ليث حرب وهو أكبر من أن ينه مثلي 10 على نعوته فلو طفت بين الركن والمقام لحلفت أني ما رأيت بعيني مثله ولا والله ما رأى هو مثل نفسه في العلم.

وفيه قلة مداراة وعدم تودة غالباً والله يغفر له وهو فقير لآمال له وملبوسه كأحد الفقهاء فرجية ودلق وعمامة تكون [ب] قيمة ثلاثين درهماً ومداس ضعيف الثمن وشعره مقصوص وعليه مهابة وشبيه يسير ولحيته مستديرة ولونه أبيض حنطي اللون وهو 15 ريع القامة بعيد ما بين المنكبين كأن عينيه لسانان ناطقان ويصلي بالناس صلاة لا يكون أطول من ركوعها وسجودها²⁶ وربما قام لمن يجيء من سفر أو غاب عنه وإذا جاء فرما

²⁰ ابن عبد الهادي، عقود، ١١٧: فحري. ابن الورد، تاريخ، ٣٨٧، ٢: فحري. ابن رجب، ذيل، ٢، ٣٩٤: فحري. ابن حجر،

ذك، ١، ٩٥: فحري.

²¹ ابن عبد الهادي، عقود، ١١٧: وقائع.

²² ابن عبد الهادي، عقود، ١١٨: بكيفية وجمعية. ابن حجر، ذك، ١، ٩٥: قلبية وجمعية.

²³ ابن رجب، ذيل، ٣٩٥، ٢: + ودخل.

²⁴ ابن رجب، ذيل، ٣٩٥، ٢: + يعني غازان.

²⁵ في الاصل: بخطولناه وبيولاه.

²⁶ ابن رجب، ذيل، ٣٩٥، ٢: وسجود.

يقومون له والكل عنده سواء فإنه²⁷ فارغ من هذه الرسوم ولم ينحن لأحد قط وإنما يسلم ويصافح ويتبسم²⁸ وقد يعظم جلسه مرة ويهينه في المحاورة مرات.

ولما صنف المسألة الحموية في الصفات سنة ثمان وتسعين تحزبوا له²⁹ وآل بهم الأمر إلى أن طافوا بها على قسبة من جهة القاضي الحنفي ونودي عليه بأن لا يستفتى ثم قام بنصره طائفة آخرون وسلم الله.

5

فلما كان في سنة خمس وسبعمئة جاء الأمر من مصر بأن يُسأل عن معتقده فجمع له القضاة والعلماء [fol. 73r]. مجلس نائب دمشق الأفرم فقال: أنا كنت قد سئلت عن معتقد السنة³⁰ فأجبت عنه في جزء من سنين وطلبه من داره فأحضر وقرأه فنازعه في موضعين أو ثلاثة منه وطال المجلس فقاموا واجتمعوا مرتين أيضاً لتتمة الجزء وحاققوه ثم وقع الاتفاق على أن هذا معتقد سلفي جيد وبعضهم قال ذلك كرهاً.

10

وكان المصريون قد سعوا في أمر الشيخ و ملؤوا الأمير ركن الدين الجاشنكير³¹ والذي تسلطن عليه فطلب إلى مصر على البريد فتاني يوم دخوله اجتمع له القضاة والفقهاء بقلعة مصر وانتصب ابن عدلان له خصماً وادعى عليه عند القاضي ابن مخلوف المالكي: إن هذا يقول إن الله تكلم بالقرآن بحرف وصوت وإنه تعالى على العرش بذاته وإن الله يُشار إليه الإشارة الحسية وقال: أطلب عقوبته على ذلك فقال القاضي: ما تقول يا فقيه؟ فحمد الله وأثنى عليه فقليل له: أسرع ما أحضرناك لتخطب فقال: أُمْنَع³² من الثناء على الله؟! فقال القاضي: أجب فقد حمدت الله فسكت فألح عليه فقال: فمن الحاكم³³ في؟ فأشاروا له إلى القاضي ابن مخلوف فقال: أنت خصمي فكيف تحكم في؟! وغضب وانزعج وأسكت القاضي فأقيم الشيخ وأخواه وسُجنوا بالجلب بقلعة [fol. 74v] الجبل وجرت أمور طويلة وكُتب إلى الشام كتاب سلطاني

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²⁷ ابن رجب، ذيل، ٢، ٣٩٥: كاته.

²⁸ ابن رجب، ذيل، ٢، ٣٩٥: يتبسم.

²⁹ كذا. ولعل الصواب: عليه.

³⁰ ابن عبد الهادي، عقود، ١٩٦: اهل السنة.

³¹ وفي الاصل: الششنكير.

³² ابن عبد الهادي، عقود، ١٩٦: - و.

³³ ابن عبد الهادي، عقود، ١٩٧: أُوْمِنِع.

³⁴ ابن عبد الهادي، عقود، ١٩٧: الحكم.

بالخط³⁵ عليه فقري بجامع دمشق وتألّم الناس له ثم بقي سنة ونصفاً وأُخرج وكتب لهم ألفاظاً اقترحوها عليه وهُدّد وتُوعد بالقتل إن لم يكتبها.

وأقام بمصر يقرئ العلم ويجتمع خلق عنده إلى أن تكلم في الاتحادية القائلين بوحدة الوجود³⁶ فتحزب عليه صوفية وفقراء وسعوا فيه وأنه يتكلم في صفوة الأولياء فعمل له محفل ثم أخرجوه على البريد ثم ردوه على مرحلة من مصر ورأوا مصلحتهم في اعتقاله 5 فسجنوه في حبس القضاة سنة ونصفاً فجعل أصحابه يدخلون إليه في السر ثم تظاهروا فأخرجته الدولة على البريد إلى الإسكندرية وحُبس ببرج منها وشُنّع بأنه قُتل وأنه غرق غير مرة.

فلما عاد السلطان³⁷ من الكرك وأباد أضداده بادر باستحضار الشيخ إلى القاهرة مكرماً واجتمع به وحادثه وسارره بمحضرة القضاة والكبار وزاد في إكرامه ثم نزل وسكن 10 في دار واجتمع بعد ذلك بالسلطان ولم يكن الشيخ من رجال الدولة ولا يسلك معهم تلك النواميس³⁸ فلم يعد³⁹ السلطان يجتمع به.

فلما قدم السلطان لكشف العدو عن الرحبة جاء الشيخ إلى دمشق سنة اثنتي عشرة 15 ثم جرت له⁴⁰ أمور ومعن ما بين ارتفاع [fol.74r] وانخفاض وفتح سوقه ودخل في مسائل كبار لا تحتملها عقول أبناء زمانه ولا علومهم كمسألة التكفير في الحلف في الطلاق ومسألة أن الطلاق الثلاث لا تقع إلا واحدة وأن الطلاق في الحيض لا يقع وصنّف في ذلك توافيق لعلها تبلغ أربعين كراساً فمُنِع لذلك من الفتيا وساس نفسه سياسة عجيبة واستبد برأيه وعسى أن يكون ذلك كفارة له فالله يوشك يروّح منه ويوفّقه لمراضيه.

وهو الآن يلقي الدرس ويقرئ العلم ولا يفتي إلا بلسانه ويقول: لا يسعني أن أكتّم العلم وله إقدام وشهامة وقوة نفس توقعه في أمور صعبة ويدفع الله عنه 20 وسط ولم يتزوج ولا تسرى ولا له من المعلوم إلا شيء قليل وأخوه يقوم بمصالحه ولا

³⁵ ابن عبد الهادي، عقود، ١٩٧: بالخط.

³⁶ ابن عبد الهادي، عقود، ١٩٧: + وهم ابن سبعين وابن عربي والقونوي، وأشباههم.

³⁷ ابن عبد الهادي، عقود، ١٩٨: + أيّده الله تعالى.

³⁸ ابن عبد الهادي، عقود، ١٩٨: - ولم يكن الشيخ من رجال الدولة ولا يسلك معهم تلك النواميس

³⁹ ابن عبد الهادي، عقود، ١٩٨: يكن + بعد.

⁴⁰ ابن عبد الهادي، عقود، ١٩٨: - له.

يطلب منهم غداء ولا عشاء في غالب الوقت وما رأيت في العالم أكرم منه ولا أفرغ منه عن الدينار والدرهم بل لا يذكره ولا أظنه يدور في ذهنه وفيه مروءة وقيام مع أصحابه وسعي [في] مصالحهم وهو لون عجيب ونبأ غريب.

- وهذا الذي ذكرت من سيرته فعلى الاقتصاد وإلا فحولته أناس من الفضلاء يعتقدون فيه وفي علمه وزهده ودينه وقيامه في نصر الإسلام [fol. 75v] بكل طريق 5 أضعاف ما سُقت وثُمَّ أناس من أصداده يعتقدون فيه وفي علمه لكن يقولون: فيه طيش وعجلة وحدة ومحبة للرئاسة وثُمَّ أناس قد علّم الناس قلة خيرهم وكثرة هواهم ينالون منه سباً وتكفيراً وهم إما متكلمون أو من صوفية الاتحادية أو من شيوخ الذكر⁴¹ أو ممن قد تكلم هو فيهم فأقذع وبالع فالفه يكفيه شر نفسه وغالبُ خطّه على الفضلاء أو المتزهدة فبحق وفي بعضه هو مجتهد ومذهبه⁴² توسعة العذر للخلق ولا يكفّر أحداً إلا بعد قيام 10 الدليل والحجة عليه ويقول: هذه المقالة كفر وضلال وصاحبها مجتهد جاهل لم تقم عليه حجة الله ولعله رجع عنها أو تاب إلى الله ويقول: إيمانه ثَبَّتْ له يقين فلا نخرجه منه إلا بيقين أما من عرف الحق وعانده وحادّ عنه فكافر ملعون كإبليس وإلا من الذي يسلم من الخطأ في الأصول والفروع؟ ويقول في كبار المتكلمين والحكماء: هؤلاء ما عرفوا الإسلام ولا ما جاء به محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم ويقول في كثير من أحوال المشايخ: 15 إنها شيطانية أو نفسانية فيُنظرُ في متابعة الشيخ الكتاب والسنة وفي شمائله وتألهه وعلمه فإن كان كذلك فحالهِ صحيح وكشفه [fol. 75r] رحامي وبعضهم له رأي من الجن فيُخبر بالغيبيات ليغويه وله في ذلك تصانيف عديدة وعنده في ذلك حكايات عن⁴³ هذا الضرب وهذا الضرب لو جُمع لبلغت مجلدات هي من أعجب العجب ولقد عوفي من الصرع الجنّي غير واحد بمجرد تهديده للجنّي وجرت له في ذلك ألوان وفصول ولم يفعل 20 أكثر من أن يتلو آيات ويقول: إن لم تنقطع عن هذا المصروع أو المصروعة وإلا عملنا معك حكم الشرع وإلا عملنا معك ما يرضي الله ورسوله.

وقد سمعتُ منه جزء ابن عرفة مرات وخرّج له المحدث أمين الدين الواني أربعين حديثاً عن أربعين شيخاً وقد حج سنة إحدى وتسعين وقرأ لنفسه الكثير من الحديث

⁴¹ وفي الاصل يبدو الذوكرة.

⁴² وفي الاصل: وبعضه ومذهب. ووُضع خط على وبعضه.

⁴³ كذا. ولعل الصواب: من.

- وقرأ الغيلانيات في مجلس ومن مسموعه معجم الطبراني الأكبر سمعه من البرهان الدرجي بإجازته من أبي جعفر الصيدلاني وغيره ثم ظفروا له بمسألة السفر لزيارة قبور النبيين وإن السفر وشد الرحال لذلك منهي عنه لقوله عليه السلام: "لا تشدوا الرحال إلا إلى ثلاثة مساجد" مع اعترافه بأن الزيارة بلا شد رحل قربة وشنعوا عليه بها واستفتوا عليه وكتب فيها جماعة بأنه يلزم من منعه شائبة تنقص للنبوّة فيكفر بذلك وأفقي عدة بأنه مخطئ في 5 ذلك خطأ المجتهدين [fol.76v] المغفور لهم ووافقه جماعة وكبرت القضية وأعيد إلى قاعة بالقلعة فبقي بها بضعة وعشرين شهراً وآل الأمر إلى أن مُنع من الكتابة والمطالعة وما تركوا عنده كراساً ولا دواة وبقي أشهراً على ذلك فأقبل على التلاوة وبقي يختتم في ثلاث وأكثر ويتعبد ويعبد ربه حتى أتاه اليقين.
- 10 وفرحت له بهذه الخاتمة فإنه كان لا لذة عنده توازي كتابة العلم وتأليفه فمُنِع أطيّب غواية رحمه الله فلم يُفجأ الناس إلا بغتة وما علموا بمرضه فتأسف الخلق عليه ودخل إليه أقاربه وخواصه وازدحم الخلق على باب القلعة وبالجامع حتى بقي مثل صلاة الجمعة سواء أو أرحج فضلى عليه بالقلعة ابن تمام وبالجامع الأموي الخطيب وبظاهر البلد أخوه زين الدين وكان الجمع وافراً إلى الغاية شيعه الخلق من أربعة أبواب البلد وحُمِل على الرؤوس وحُزِر الخلق بستين ألفاً والنساء اللاتي على الطريق بخمسة عشر ألفاً وأكثر البكاء 15 والتأسف عليه ودُفِن بمقابر الصوفية إلى جانب أخيه الإمام شرف الدين بن عبد الله وانتاب الناس زيارة قبره ورويت له عدة منامات حسنة ورثاه جماعة.
- وكانت وفاته في جوف ليلة الاثنين العشرين من ذي القعدة سنة ثمان وعشرين وسبعمائة غفر الله له آمين وعاش سبعمائة وستين سنة وأشهرها وكان أسود الرأس قليل شيب اللحية ربة من الرجال⁴⁴ جهوري الصوت أبيض أعين مقتصدًا في لباسه وعمامته لقص شعره دائماً وكان لم يتغير عليه شيء من حواسه إلا عينه الواحدة نقص نورها قليلاً. 20 رحمه الله ورضي عنه ورضي عنا وبركته وغفر لنا عنه وكرمه.

⁴⁴ ابن الوردي، تاريخ، ٢، ٣٨٩: - من الرجال.

**[An excerpt of the life of *shaykh al-islām* Taqī
l-Dīn ibn Taymiyya]**

[fol. 70r] Praise be to God alone. This an excerpt of the life of *shaykh al-islām* Taqī l-Dīn ibn Taymiyya—may God be pleased with him—from what the *shaykh*, the imam, the most erudite, the guardian [of tradition] Shams al-Dīn Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ‘Uthmān al-Dhahabī al-Shāfi‘ī has composed—may God encompass both of them with His grace and favour. He said:

Ibn Taymiyya Taqī l-Dīn Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm b. ‘Abd al-Salām b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Abī l-Qāsim al-Khiḍr b. Muḥammad b. al-Khiḍr b. ‘Alī b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Taymiyya, the imam, the learned, the man of extensive knowledge, the distinguished, the unrivalled, the *shaykh al-Islām*, the exception of the age, [that is] Taqī l-Dīn Abū l-‘Abbās Aḥmad al-Ḥarrānī al-Ḥanbalī lived in Damascus and was born in Ḥarrān¹ on 12 Rabi’ I of the year 661. His father, together with him and his brothers, fled to Syria at the time of the Mongol oppression; he travelled during the night with them and with his books on a carriage for lack of riding animals. The enemy almost caught them when the carriage stopped, so he humbly prayed to God and called for His help and they were spared, escaped [the danger] and arrived in Damascus in the year 667. [First,] they studied the text of Ibn ‘Arafa² and the like under al-Zayn b. ‘Abd al-Dā‘im.³ Then, our great *shaykh* learned from Ibn Abī l-Yusr,⁴ from Kamāl b. ‘Abd⁵ and al-Majid b. ‘Asākir,⁶ followers of al-Khushū‘ī,⁷ from al-Jamāl b. al-Ṣayrafī,⁸ from Aḥmad b. Abī l-Khayr Salāma,⁹ from al-Qāsim al-Irbilī,¹⁰

¹ Ḥarrān, a small town in northern Mesopotamia, today in modern Turkey, was once renowned for the presence of a Sabea community and because it had been an important Hanbalī centre. It was destroyed by the Mongols in 1271. Cf. G. Fehervari, art. ‘Ḥarrān’, in: *EF*, III, 234–7.

² Ibn ‘Arafa (d. 257/870–71), a traditionist from Baghdad and pupil of al-Tirmidhī, Ibn al-Mubārak and Ibn Māja. He was the author of a collection of traditions called *Juz’ Ibn ‘Arafa* (cf. fol. 75r). F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des Arabischen Schrifttums* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), I, 134.

³ Ibn ‘Abd al-Dā‘im al-Maqdisī (d. 668/1269–70). In his biographies he is called *musnid al-Sha‘m wa-faḥihū-hā wa-muḥaddithū-hā*. He was a renowned Hanbalī scholar. He studied in Baghdad and in Ḥarrān with Ibn Taymiyya’s ancestor, Fakhr al-Dīn ibn Taymiyya (d. 621 or 622/1224–25). Cf. al-Dhahabī, *al-Ibar fī khabar man gabara*, ed. Ṣ.D. al-Munajjid-F. al-Sayyid (Kuwayt: Ma‘had al-Makhtūṭāt bi-Dār al-Kutub al-‘Miṣriyya, 1966), V, 288; Ibn Kathīr, *BN*, XIII, 257; Ibn al-‘Imād, *ShDh*, V, 325–6; and Pouzet, *Damas*, 93.

⁴ Ibn Abī l-Yusr (d. 672/1273). He is known as *musnid al-Sha‘m* and was one of Ibn Ḥanbal’s *Musnad* transmitters in Damascus. Cf. Ibn al-‘Imād, *ShDh*, V, 338; and Pouzet, *Damas*, 434.

⁵ Unidentified.

⁶ Al-Majid ibn ‘Asākir (d. 669/1270–71): a Damascene Shāfi‘ī traditionist. He studied with the two famous Baghdadi Hanbalī scholars, Ibn Tabarzaḍ (d. 607/1210) and Hanbal al-Rusāfi (d. 604/1207), and with the prominent Hanafī philologist Abū l-Yumm al-Kindī (d. 613/1217). From his teachers, one would say that he was of traditionalist leanings. He was buried on Mount Qāsyūn. Cf. al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl Mir‘āt al-Zamān* (Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-Islāmī, 1992?), II, 463; and Ibn al-‘Imād, *ShDh*, V, 331.

⁷ It is not clear whether al-Dhahabī means here Abū Ṭāhir Barakāt al-Khushū‘ī (d. 598/1201) or his son Abū Ibrāhīm ibn Abī Ṭāhir Barakāt (d. 640/1241–42). Nicknamed by Abū Shāma as *musnid al-Sha‘m*, the former had been a widely acknowledged scholar in *ḥadīth* studies, but died too early to have been the teacher of the masters of Ibn Taymiyya mentioned in the passage. The latter lived closer to the generation of Ibn Taymiyya and was also a famous Damascene traditionist, but was less well-known than his father. On the son see Ibn al-‘Imād, *ShDh*, V, 207, and on his father see Abū Shāma, *Tarājim*, 28–9. Šāfadi, *Wāfi*, ed. A. Amara and J. Sublet (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner Verlag, 1980), X, 117; and Pouzet, *Damas*, 441.

⁸ Jamāl Yaḥyā ibn al-Ṣayrafī (d. 696/1296–97), a Hanbalī *muftī* from Ḥarrān. He studied in Baghdad with Ibn Tabarzaḍ and in Damascus with al-Kindī. Cf. Ibn al-‘Imād, *ShDh*, V, 363.

⁹ Aḥmad ibn Abī l-Khayr Salāma al-Haddād (d. 678/1279–80), a Damascene Hanbalī scholar, a tailor and a street-trader. He had been a pupil of al-Kindī. Cf. Ibn al-‘Imād, *ShDh*, V, 360.

¹⁰ Abū Bakr ibn al-Qāsim al-Irbilī (d. 680/1281–82), a scholar from Irbil. He later moved to Damascus where he died. He was an important transmitter of Muslim’s *Ṣaḥīḥ* which he had studied with al-Mu‘ayyid al-Ṭūsī (d. 617/1220). Cf. Yūnīnī, *Dhayl Mir‘āt al-Zamān*, IV, 121; and Ibn al-‘Imād, *ShDh*, V, 367.

from the *shaykh* Shams al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān [fol. 71v] b. Abī ‘Umar,¹¹ from Abī l-Ghanā’im b. ‘Ilān¹² and many others. He studied Aḥmad’s [Ibn Ḥanbal’s] *Musnad* repeatedly, the great books [of the *Sunna*] and the sections [of the Quran]. He became occupied with *ḥadīth* and copied a good amount of it, he studied calligraphy and mathematics in elementary school, he learned the Quran by heart and then devoted himself to jurisprudence. For days he read Arabic under Ibn ‘Abd al-Qawī and when he mastered it he began contemplating the Book of Sibawayhi until he [fully] understood it. He distinguished himself in grammar and then became completely occupied with quranic exegesis until he achieved in it the greatest success. He mastered the principles of jurisprudence and other subjects, and all at a time when he was merely a boy of ten years or so. The eminent¹³ were left speechless by the extent of his intelligence, the agility of his mind, the power of his memory and his speed of perception.

He grew in perfect chastity and abstinence, in piety and devotion, being modest in dress and appetite. In his childhood he used to attend places of reading and gathering [where] he would talk and debate, silencing the authoritative men and conveying a knowledge that confounded the notables of the town. Consequently, he issued legal opinions from the age of nineteen years old or less.

From that time onwards, he started collecting and compiling and eagerly devoted himself to work. Once his father died, having been a distinguished Ḥanbali and one of their leaders, he began teaching in his stead, when he was twenty-one. He became well known and his fame spread around the world. From a chair, on Fridays he began commenting on the Venerable Book. He would explain [it, addressing] the assembly without hesitation, and much as he would explain the lecture calmly and with a loud and eloquent voice so that in an assembly he would utter up to two quires. At the same time he would write [fol. 71r] a number of related [points] on the legal opinion in question with a quick handwriting of the utmost difficulty and obscurity.

Concerning Ibn Taymiyya, I read in a passage by our *shaykh*, the most erudite Kamāl al-Dīn,¹⁴ authority of the Shāfi’is: ‘If he was asked about any subject of knowledge, the person who saw him or listened to him would think that he [i.e. Ibn Taymiyya] did not know anything but that subject and reckon that he did not know anybody equal to him. If the jurists of the other factions¹⁵ sat in his company, they would benefit from him in aspects of their own doctrine’. He said: ‘There is no known instance of him engaging in debate with

¹¹ Shams al-Dīn ibn Abī ‘Umar al-Ḥanbalī (d. 682/1282–83). One of the better known Ḥanbali personalities of Damascus. He was the son of the *shaykh* Abū ‘Umar ibn Qudāma al-Maqdisi (d. 607/1210–11). He studied with his father and his uncle Muwaffaq al-Dīn (d. 620/1223) who transmitted their knowledge on the authority of Ibn Ṭabarzad, al-Kindī and Ibn Ḥanbal al-Ruṣāfi. He was the first Ḥanbalī *qādī l-quḍāt* in Damascus. In his biographical accounts, Ibn Taymiyya’s name effectively appears among his pupils. Cf. Ibn Rajab, *Dhayl*, I, 304–10; Abū Shāma, *Tarājim*, 235–36; Pouzet, *Damas*, 417.

¹² Abū l-Ghanā’im Muslim ibn ‘Ilān (d. 668/1269–70), a Damascene Ḥanbalī *qādī* and a pupil of al-Khushū’i (cf. *supra*) and of Ibn Ṭabarzad. Cf. Ibn al-‘Imād, *ShDh*, V, 369.

¹³ The Arabic is *al-fudalā’* (pl. of *al-fādil*): here, a man possessing excellence (*fadl*) in knowledge. Cf. E. W. Lane, *An Arabic–English Lexicon* (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, repr. 1990), VI, 2413.

¹⁴ Kamāl al-Dīn al-Zamlakānī (d. 727/1326–27), a scholar and contemporary of Ibn Taymiyya. He was a man of great power and such an illustrious representative of the Shāfi’ī *madhhab* that he was buried in Cairo next to al-Shāfi’i. For his biography see Ibn al-‘Imād, *ShDh*, VI, 78–80; Ibn Kathir, *BN*, XIV, 35–38 and 131–32; al-Subkī, *TSh*, V, 251–56; Ibn Hajar, *DK*, IV, 47–8; Ibn al-‘Imād, *ShDh*, VI, 78; and al-Ṣafādī, *Wāfi*, IV, 214–21. About his controversial relationship with Ibn Taymiyya cf. Sherman A. Jackson, ‘Ibn Taymiyyah on trial in Damascus’, in *Journal of Semitic Studies* XXXIX/1, 1994, 48 and Bori, *Ibn Taymiyya: una vita esemplare*, ch. 4, 150–53.

¹⁵ i.e. the non-Ḥanbalī jurists.

someone who silenced him. He did not speak on any science, whether pertaining to the sciences of the *shar'* or some other [science], without surpassing its experts and applying to it [i.e. to the subject at hand] the preconditions of *ijtihād* as is necessary'.

I said: He had a perfect knowledge of the transmitters of Muslim tradition, of challenging and correcting them and their peers. He knew the different kinds of traditions, whether with a long chain or a short one, knowing the authentic from the faulty. This came by virtue of his full recall of their bases in which he excelled. None of his contemporaries ever reached his standard nor came close to him. He was outstanding in quoting traditions and in extracting arguments from them. He was the best in tracing them back to the Sunna Books or to the *Musnad* to such a degree that it was entirely credible to say of him that: 'Every tradition that Ibn Taymiyya does not know is no tradition'. Nevertheless, the all-encompassing knowledge is to God alone; and regardless of the fact that, in the knowledge of tradition, he would draw from a sea while other imams would draw from mere streams.

As for quranic exegesis, he was an uncontested authority, being extraordinarily skilful in recalling quranic verses when he needed to provide the legal proof for the matter at issue. If a Quran teacher¹⁶ saw him he would become astounded by him. As a result of his exceptional pre-eminence in quranic exegesis and his superior knowledge, he would throw light on the erroneous nature of many of the opinions of commentators and would weaken many of them [fol. 72v] and supplant them with the only interpretation that agreed with the content of the Quran and the Sunna. From one day to the other he would write four quires or more of exegesis, jurisprudence, the principles of Islamic religion and law, refutation[s] of the philosophers and of speculative sciences. It is no exaggeration [to say] that up to now his writings have reached five hundred volumes. On other topics he has written works bound in single volumes like *The Question of Tahlil*,¹⁷ *The Question of Hafir* (?),¹⁸ *The Question of the Person Who Insulted the Prophet*,¹⁹ *The Question of the Necessity of the Straight Path in Censuring Innovations*.²⁰ He has written [also] *A Refutation of Ibn Muṭṭahar al-Rāfiḍī*²¹ in three big volumes, a work against the *Ta'sīs*

¹⁶ For the use of the term *muqri'* rather than *qārī'* see Pouzet, *Damas*, 173.

¹⁷ The reference hints at one of the most controversial topics dealt with by Ibn Taymiyya, i.e. his refusal to accept the *tahlil* practice. The work in which he expresses his view on the subject is the *Iqāmat al-dalīl fī ibtāl al-tahlil*. Cf. Ibn Taymiyya, *Kitāb majmū'a fatāwā shaykh al-Islām Taqī l-Dīn Ibn Taymiyya al-Harrānī*, ed. Faraj Allāh al-Kurdī (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Kurdīstān al-'Ilmiyya, 1909–1911), III, 3–267.

¹⁸ Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī, 'Uqūd, 35 is more explicit and calls the work: *Tahrīr al-kalām fī ḥādithat al-aqsām* or *Kitāb al-tahrīr fī mas'alat al-ḥafīr* (also in Ibn Rajab, *Dhayl*, II, 404). Apart from its polemical nature, the subject of this *mas'ala* still remains unclear to me.

¹⁹ Ibn Taymiyya, *al-Ṣarīm al-mas'lūl 'alā shātīm al-rasūl* (Beirut: Dār al-Jil, 1975). The occasion of the composition of the book is an episode which took place in 693/1293; when a Christian of Suwaydā was accused of having insulted the Prophet, Ibn Taymiyya strongly supported his prosecution. When civil disturbances broke out in Damascus, Ibn Taymiyya was suspected of being behind them, and was thus tried and imprisoned for a short period. The longest account of the *fitna* is that reported by al-Jazarī, *Hawādith*, I, 202–05. Further details of the episode can be found in: Ibn Kathīr, *BN*, XIII, 335–6; Ibn Rajab, *Dhayl*, II, 396; al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-muqaffā l-kabīr*, ed. M. Ya'lāwī (Beirut: Dar al-Garb al-Islāmī, 1991) I, 456; and Murad, 'Ibn Taymiyya on trial' 1–2, and 26 n. 4.

²⁰ Ibn Taymiyya, *Kitāb iqtīdā' al-ṣirāt al-mustaḥīm mukhālafat aṣḥāb al-jahīm* (Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-Sharīfā, 1907). The most important sections of the book have been translated into English, with commentary, by M. U. Memon, *Ibn Taymiyya's Struggle against Popular Islam* (The Hague: Mouton, 1976). According to Memon the book is to be dated between 721/1321 and 726/1326, the years in which Ibn Taymiyya intensified his polemical activity against religious minorities.

²¹ Ibn Taymiyya, *Minhāj al-sunna al-nabawiyya fī naqd kalām al-shī'a al-qadariyya*, 4vv. in 2 tt. (Cairo: Būlāq, 1904). It is a polemical work, written around 1317, against the imami notion of imamate as represented by the famous scholar Ibn al-Muṭṭahar al-Hillī (d. 726/1325). On al-Hillī's doctrines see H. Laoust, 'Les fondements de l'imamat dans le Minhāj d'al-Hillī' in *REI* XLVI/1, 1978, 5–55; idem, 'La critique du sunnisme dans la doctrine d'al-Hillī' in *REI* XXXIV, 1966, 35–60.

al-Taqdīs by al-Rāzī in seven volumes,²² a *Book against the Greek Logic*²³ and a *Book on the Agreement of Reason and Revelation* in two volumes,²⁴ and his disciples have already collected six big volumes of his legal opinions.

He had an in-depth knowledge of the orientations of the Companions and the Successor doctrines. He would rarely talk about a subject without quoting the schools of the four imams. Still, he contradicted them in some well-known issues about which he wrote and for which he provided arguments using the Book and the Sunna. He has compiled a work entitled *Politics According to Divine Law for Establishing Order for Sovereign and Subjects*²⁵ and a book [called] *Removing the Reproach from the Learned Imams*.²⁶ When he was imprisoned in Alexandria the governor of Sibta²⁷ asked him to grant him a licence to teach his traditions and to copy some of them in nominal order.²⁸ So he wrote down from memory, in ten pages, a good number of them, with the chains of transmission, in such a way that the best of traditionists would have been incapable of accomplishing [fol. 72r] even a part of it. For some years now he has not issued legal opinions according to a specific doctrine, but rather according to the evidence that supports his position.

He supported the pure Sunna and the way of the pious Ancestors, which he vindicated with unprecedented proofs, premises and cases using expressions which men of former and recent times refrained from using and feared. He was so daring in this that a group of scholars from Egypt and Syria turned against him in an unprecedented way. They accused him of being an innovator, they confronted him and treated him with contempt. Yet, he was firm without giving himself up to flattery or to favouritism, on the contrary, he uttered the bitter truth to which he had been led by his independent judgement, his sharp mind, his vast knowledge of the Sunna and of the [scholars'] opinions. This was in addition to his celebrated piety, the completeness of his thought, his swiftness in learning, his fear of God, and his veneration of the sacred things of God. And now turn your attention to the war-like clashes and to the Egyptian and Syrian battles! How many times was he unanimously accused, but God rescued him; for he was steady in supplication, frequent in calling for His help, resolute in [his] trust [in Him] and firm-hearted. He devoted himself intensively

²² The book is usually quoted in the list of his works: Ibn Rajab, *Dhayl*, II, 403; al-Safādī, *Wafī*, VII, 24.

²³ Ibn Taymiyya, *Kitāb al-radd 'alā l-manṭiqiyyin* (composed in 709/1309 during his stay in Alexandria) ed. Sharaf al-Dīn al-Kutubī (Bombay: al-Maṭba'a al-Qayyima, 1949). The abridged version by al-Suyūṭī (*Jahd al-qariha fī tarjīd al-naṣiḥa* or *Mukhtaṣar naṣiḥat ahl al-imān fī l-radd 'alā manṭiq al-Yūnān*) has been translated into English by Wael B. Hallaq, *Ibn Taymiyya against the Greek Logicians* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) and can be found in *MF*, IX' (*Kitāb al-manṭiq*), 82–255.

²⁴ Ibn Taymiyya, *Dar' al-ta'arūd al-'aql wa-l-naql* or *Muwāfaqa ṣaḥīḥ al-manqūl li-ṣaḥīḥ al-ma'qūl* published in part on the margin of *Minhaj al-sunna al-nabawiyya*, ed. Būlāq (Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-Kubrā l-Amiriyya, 1321/1903). A complete version in 11 volumes has been edited by M. Rashād Sālim, (Riyād: Dār al-Kunūz al-Adabiyya, 1979).

²⁵ Ibn Taymiyya, *al-Siyāsa al-shar'iyya fī islāh al-rā'i wa-l-ra'iyya*, ed. 'Iṣām Fāris al-Ḥarastānī (Beirut: Dār al-Jil, 1993). H. Laoust has translated the book into French, *Le Traité de Droit Publique d'Ibn Taymiyya. Traduction Annotée de la Siyāsa shar'iyya* (Beirut: Institut Français de Damas, 1948); in English: O. A. Farrūkh, *Ibn Taymiyya on Public and Private Law in Islam or Public Policy in Islamic Jurisprudence* (Beirut, 1966). There exists an Italian translation by G. Piccinelli, *Il buon governo secondo l'Islam* (Lesa: Fondazione Noja Nosedà, 2002). According to H. Laoust the book was composed between 1311 and 1315.

²⁶ Ibn Taymiyya, *Raf' al-malām fī a'immat al-islām wa-mabāḥith ukhrā*, ed. Z. Shāwīsh (Beirut: Manshūrāt al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1970').

²⁷ Sibta (Ceuta): a slipway town on the extreme tip of the Maghreb, on the Strait of Gibraltar facing al-Andalus. Cf. Yaqūt, *Mu'jam al-buldān* (Beirut: Dār Sādir, 1957), III, 182–3 and Abū l-Fiḍā', *Taqwīm al-buldān*, ed. J. T. Reinaud and M. de Slane (Paris, 1840), 122–3.

²⁸ i.e. 'according to their *rāwī*'. The license (*ijāza*) here mentioned is also quoted by Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī ('*Uqūd*, 57) in a long list of Ibn Taymiyya's works in which he mentions the titles and the genre of his writings.

and with concentration to his prayers and invocations. On the other hand, there are people who love him from among the scholars and the pious, the soldiers and the amirs, the tradesmen and the authorities. The rest of the common people love him because he stands up for their benefit, day and night, in his words and his writings.

As for his courage, proverbs are made of it and in some of them he resembles the greatest heroes. Indeed, God has put him in the times of Ghāzān and he faced the burdens of the situation himself.²⁹ He did not remain at rest, but rose and went out, meeting the king twice,³⁰ [as well as] Quṭlūshāh and Mūlay;³¹ with Qibjak³² being surprised by his courage [fol. 73v] and audacity in the face of the Mongols.

Vehemence possessed him when he worked as if he were a fighting lion. One like me is unworthy of calling attention to his qualities. Had I walked around between the corner [of the Ka'ba] and the tomb [of Abraham], I would had sworn that I had not seen by my eyes anybody like him. No, by God! Not even he ever saw anybody like himself in knowledge!

He was frequently tactless and argumentative, may God forgive him. He was poor, having no money and his clothing—like any other jurist—was a

²⁹ Ibn Taymiyya's activism against the Mongols is indeed one of the most celebrated aspect of his personality. Al-Dhahabī is here very probably hinting at the battle of Shaqḥab (2 Ramaḍān 702/ 20 April 1303) in which the Mongols, led by Ghāzān, were defeated by the Mamluk troops. Ibn Taymiyya is said to have actively participated in the event by taking part in the fight and encouraging the troops. For a description of the battle, see Ibn Kathīr, *BN*, IV, 23–6; Anonymous, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Mamlükensultane in den Jahren 690–741 der Hīġra nach arabischen Handschriften*, ed. K. V. Zetterstēen (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1919), 110–14; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-fikra fī ta'rikh al-hijra*, ed. D. S. Richards (Beirut: al-Ma'had al-ʿAlmānī li-l-Abḥāth al-Sharqiyya, 1998) 375–9; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*, ed. M. 'Ulwī Shalṭūt et al. (Cairo: National Library Press, 1998), XXXII, 28ff; Ibn Dawādārī, *Kanz*, IX, 85–8.

³⁰ Al-Dhahabī is the earliest witness to record two meetings between Ghāzān and Ibn Taymiyya and not just one, as traditionally believed by Laoust, *Essai*, 117–20 and Th. Raff, *Remarks on an anti-Mongol Fatwā by Ibn Taymiyya* (Leiden: privately printed, 1973), 20–24. Al-Dhahabī's passage was then to be quoted by Ibn 'Abd al-Hadī, *Uqūd*, 118, and al-Mar'ī, *al-Shahādāt al-zakiyya fī thanā'i al-a'imma 'alā Ibn Taymiyya*, ed. Najm 'Abd al-Raḥmān Khalf (Beirut: Dār al-Furqān, 1983), 42.

³¹ Quṭlūshāh (d. 707/1307) and Mūlay (d. 707/1307) were the two Mongol military leaders who invaded Syria with Ghāzān. In 699/1300 Ibn Taymiyya is reported to have met the two of them on different occasions. According to the sources, Ibn Taymiyya met Mūlay on 2 Rajab 699/24 March 1300 to ask for the liberation of prisoners. Ibn Taymiyya is said to have stayed in Mūlay's camp for three days. Cf. al-Dhahabī in: 'Adh-Dhahabī record of the destruction of Damascus by the Mongols in 699–700/1300–1301'; S. Löwinger and J. de Somogyi (eds.), *Ignace Goldziher Memorial Volume* (Budapest, 1948) I, 379. Al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, ed. Li Guo, I, 163–63–II, 124; Ibn Abī l-Faḍā'il, *Histoire des Sultans Mamelouks*. Texte arabe publié et traduit en français par E. Blochet, in *Patrologia Orientalis*, XIV, 1920 668–9; Zetterstēen, *Beiträge*, 78–9; Ibn Dawādārī, *Kanz*, IX, 36; al-Bīrẓālī, in: *Gāmi'*, 150; and Ibn Kathīr, *BN*, XIV, 10.

As for Quṭlūshāh, he was commander in chief of the Mongol troops during the three Syrian invasions and Ghāzān's substitute after the former left Damascus. He is said to have met Ibn Taymiyya on 21 Jumāda I 699/14 February 1300. The account is usually reported directly by Ibn Taymiyya on the authority of al-Bīrẓālī. Cf. al-Dhahabī in: 'Adh-Dhahabī record of the destruction of Damascus by the Mongols in 699–700/1300–1301', I, 377; Al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, ed. Li Guo I, 157–58–II, 109; Ibn Abī l-Faḍā'il, *Histoire* in *PO*, XIV, 660; Zetterstēen, *Beiträge*, 76–7; Ibn Dawādārī, *Kanz*, IX, 32–3. For biographical information about Quṭlūshāh cf. D. O. Morgan, art. 'Qutlugh-shāh Noyan' in *EP*, V, 559 and Ibn Hajar, *DK*, III, 153.

³² Sayf al-Dīn Qibjak (d. 710/1310–11) had been governor of Damascus in the year 697–698 (1297–1298), but had fled to the Mongols after Lājīn's murderer (698/1299). He was reappointed governor of Damascus in 699 (1299–1300) by Ghāzān, but returned to the Mamluks after the Mongol withdrawal from the Syrian capital. According to Ibn Hajar he played a very important role in the Muslim victory at Shaqḥab. After that, he was charged with the governorship of Ḥama and Aleppo (Al-Dhahabī in 'Adh-Dhahabī record of the destruction of Damascus by the Mongols in 699–700/1300–1301', I, 368. About Qibjak see Ibn Hajar, *DK*, III, 145–6 and A. Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History. The Third Reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad Ibn Qalāwūn 1310–1341* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), 33.

farajīyya, a *dilq*,³³ a turban worth thirty *dirham* and cheap shoes. He had short hair and was of daunting aspect with sparse grey hair, a 'round' beard and complexion between fair and the colour of grain. He was of medium height and it was as if his eyes were two eloquent tongues above his shoulders. He led people in the longest of prayers, bowing and prostration. Sometimes he got up to greet a person who had arrived from a journey, or else he turned away from him. When he arrived somewhere people sometimes rose to greet him, but for him it was all the same because he was unconcerned with formalities. He never bowed to anybody, restricting himself to greeting, shaking hands and smiling. He could honour his companion on occasion and then offend him repeatedly in conversation.

When he wrote *The Question of Hama* about the divine attributes in the year 698, they gathered together against him. The affair evolved to such an extent that they paraded with the text [impaled] on a cane by order of the Ḥanafī judge.³⁴ And it was publicly announced that he should not be consulted for legal opinions, whereupon another group of people came to his support, thanks be to God.

In the year 705, the order came from Egypt that he should be questioned about his creed. For this reason the governor of Damascus, al-Afram,³⁵ gathered the judges and scholars [fol. 73r] in an assembly and [Ibn Taymiyya] said: 'I have already been asked about my belief in the *Sunna* and I have answered in a volume years ago'. So he asked for it [to be brought] from his house, whereupon it was brought forth, and he read it. They discussed two or three points from it, but the session lasted a long time, so they rose. They met twice more in order to complete [the discussion] of the volume and they affirmed its truth, whereupon agreement was reached that this was a creed that conformed properly to that of the Pious Ancestors, although some people said that reluctantly.

The Egyptians had stepped into the affair of the *shaykh* and clamoured before the amir Rukn al-Dīn al-Jāshankīr³⁶ whom they had made Sultan. So he was summoned to Egypt by courier. The second day after his arrival the judges and jurists gathered together for him in the Citadel. Ibn 'Adlān³⁷ was

³³ *Al-Farajīyya*: a wide, sideless garment to be worn over other clothes, with long sleeves which usually fell beyond the finger tips. It was typical of men of religion. See R. Dozy, *Dictionnaire Détaillé des Noms des Vêtements chez les Arabes* (Amsterdam: J. Müller, 1845), 327–34; and L. A. Mayer, *Mamluk Costume. A Survey* (Geneva: A. Kundig, 1952), 50. According to Mayer, the *farajīyya* was typical of lower-rank ecclesiastics who used to wear it in place of the *dilq*. Yet Ibn Taymiyya, who is depicted as being such, is here said to be wearing both. The *dilq* is defined by Mayer as 'a wide coat, without a slit, and open over the shoulders', Mayer, *Mamluk Costume*, 50, n. 7. See also R. Dozy, *Dictionnaire Détaillé des Vêtements*, 183–5.

³⁴ He is to be identified with Jalāl al-Dīn al-Ḥanafī (d. 745/1344–45), the Ḥanafī *qāḍī l-quḍāt* who backed Ibn Taymiyya's opponents in the *Ḥamawīyya* affair and summoned him to court to discuss the text. For the episode in the sources see Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥādī, *Uqūd*, 198–202; al-Mar'ī, *Kawākib*, 114–15; Ibn Kathīr, *BN*, XIV, 4; Ibn Rajab, *Dhayl*, II, 396; Ibn Hajar, *DK*, I, 88; al-Ṣafādī, *Wāfi*, VII, 22; al-Maqrīzī, *Muqaffā*, I, 457; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rikh al-Islām*, Ms. British Library, Or. 1540, fol. 122v; H. Q. Murād, 'Ibn Taymiyya on trial: a narrative account of his miḥān' in *IS XVIII*, 1979, 3.

³⁵ Jamāl al-Dīn Aqūsh al-Afram (d. 720/1320–21) had been governor of Damascus from 698 to 709/1298–1309–10 and then governor of Kark. He took refuge with the Mongol Ilkhān Öljeytū after the return of al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn from Kark in the year 712/1313 in spite of his traditional good relations with the Sultan. For his biography see Ibn Hajar, *DK*, I, 231–3.

³⁶ Al-Malik al-Muzaffar Rukn al-Dīn al-Jāshankīr (or al-Jāshnikīr), Baybars II (d. 709/1310) was Sultan between 708/1309 and 709/1310. He was strangled by al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn on his return from exile in Kark. See G. Wiet, art. 'Baybars II' in *EF*, II, 1160.

³⁷ Shams al-Dīn ibn 'Adlān (d. 749/1348–49), Egyptian Shāfi'ī *qāḍī*. For his biography see Ibn al-'Imād, *ShDh*, VI, 164.

chosen to be the prosecution and pronounced the accusation by the Maliki judge, Ibn Makhlūf.³⁸ 'Verily this person says that God spoke the Qur'an letter by letter and sound, that He—the Sublime—sits in person on the throne, and that he can be alluded to in a tangible way' and said: 'For this I ask him to be punished'. Then spoke the judge: 'What do you have to say, jurist?'. So, [Ibn Taymiyya] took to praising and commending God, whereupon he was told: 'Hurry up! We did not make you come here to give a *khutba*!' So he said: 'Am I prevented from praising God?!' But the judge replied: 'Answer! You have already praised Him.' Still, he remained silent, but the judge insisted, so he uttered: 'Who is it in judgement of me?' And they indicated the judge Ibn Makhlūf, so he said: 'You are my enemy, how can you judge me?!'. He became enraged, taunted and silenced the judge, so the *shaykh* and his brothers were made to stand up and were imprisoned in the well in the mountain citadel [fol. 74v].³⁹ Matters dragged on. A regal edict was written [and sent to] Syria in which he was criticized. It was read in the Mosque of Damascus and people grieved for him. After that, he remained in prison for one year and a half, and was freed [only] when he wrote for them words that they chose for him, under threat and menace of being killed had he not written them.

He stayed in Egypt teaching science, and people used to gather with him until he spoke about the Ittiḥādī who profess the doctrine of the Unity of Being. For this reason the Sufis and the ascetics formed a party against him and accused him of offending the most elect Saints. So, a meeting was convened for him, hence they took him out by courier, but called him back at a day's distance from Cairo as they saw advantage in his detention. So, they jailed him in the Prison of Judges⁴⁰ for one year and a half. His followers took to paying visits to him [at first] clandestinely, then openly.⁴¹ As a result, the administration took him out [and sent him] to Alexandria where he was imprisoned in one of its towers. Rumours spread, more than once, that he had been killed or that he had drowned.⁴²

When the Sultan came back from Kark⁴³ and had vanquished his enemies, he summoned the *shaykh* to Cairo and honoured him. He met with him, spoke with him and congratulated him in the presence of the judges and the leading men and honoured him further. Then, he settled in Cairo, living in a house, and met with the Sultan after that time. [Yet,] the *shaykh* was not a man of government and did not concern himself with [its] intrigues, so the Sultan did not repeat his meeting with him.

When the Sultan set off to ward off the enemy from Raḥba, the *shaykh* arrived in Damascus, in the year 712.⁴⁴ After that, he was subject to trials and

³⁸ Ibn Makhlūf (d. 718/1318–19), Maliki *qāḍī l-quḍāt* and an adversary of Ibn Taymiyya in Cairo. For his biography see Ibn Hajar, *DK*, III, 75 and Ibn al-Imād, *ShDh*, VI, 49.

³⁹ The prison of *al-Jubb* was built by Sultan Qalāwūn I in 681/1282 and was known for being one of the worst of its kind. Cf. al-Maqrizi, *Kitāb al-mawā'iz wa-l-i'tibār fī dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa-l-akhbār* (Cairo: Būlaq, 1270/1853), II, 188–9; D. Ayalon, 'Discharges from service, banishments and imprisonments in Mamluk society' in *IOS* 2, 1972, 40.

⁴⁰ This prison is not quoted by al-Maqrizi, *Khiṭaṭ*, II, 187–9 in his 'Chapter on prisons' (*dhikr al-sujūn*).

⁴¹ Perhaps also: 'then they protested' (thumma tazāharū).

⁴² An extended version of this detail can be found in Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ghiyānī: *Jāmi'*, 96.

⁴³ Al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn (d. 741/1341) was back in power on 2 Shawwāl/5 March 1310 for his third and longest reign (709–741/1310–1341). For his biography see P. M. Holt, art. 'al-Malik al-Nāṣir' in *EF*, VII, 992–4. On his third reign in particular see A. Levanoni, *Turning Point*.

⁴⁴ Al-Raḥba: a small town on the right bank of the Euphrates besieged by the Mongols of Kharbanda in the year 712/1312–13. For a history of the town see E. Honigman (Th. Bianquis), art. 'al-Raḥba' in *EF*, VIII, 1995, 407–10. The invasion of al-Raḥba is concisely reported by Ibn Kathir, *BN*, XIV, 67 and al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*, ed. M. 'Ulwi Shaltūt et al. (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, 1997), XXXII, 199–200. On the contrary, the Syrian historian al-Birzālī pays much more attention to the siege of the town: al-Birzālī, *Ta'rikh al-Birzālī*, Ms. Leiden, Or 3098a, pp. 238–44. The Ms. folios are numbered by page. Thus, it will be quoted by page and not by folio.

tribulations between ups [fol. 74r] and downs. His followers weakened and he involved himself in weighty questions that neither the intellects of his contemporaries nor their learning could bear, such as: the question of the expiation of the oath of repudiation, the question that repudiation uttered three times is valid only once, the question that repudiation during menstruation is not valid. He composed writings about these topics in the order of some forty quires. Because of this, he was forbidden to issue legal opinions.⁴⁵ He controlled himself in a strange way and held firm to his own opinion. And it seems that this was some consolation for him, for God was on the verge of granting him rest and success in his aims.

Now he gives lectures and teaches religious science. He does not issue legal opinions except verbally, and says: I cannot conceal knowledge. He has courage and valour and his wilfulness gets him into difficult situations, may God preserve him! His poetry is scarce and mediocre. He never married nor had any concubines. He gets but a small stipend, and his brother takes care of his interests. Most of the time, he does not ask them for lunch or dinner. I have never seen in the world somebody more generous than him nor more disinterested in money. On the contrary, he does not talk about it, nor I would reckon, does he think about it. He has a strong sense of honour, he supports his disciples and provides for their interests. He is an extraordinary type of man, a rare sign [from God].

Thus have I talked about his life in a concise way. Otherwise [I should also say that] around him there are people, among the most erudite, who believe in him, in his science and renunciation, in his religion and struggle in support of Islam [fol. 75v], in any possible way, in addition to what I have already conveyed. Then there are people, among his opponents, who believe in him and in his science, but say: 'In him there is fickleness, haste, irascibility and love for leadership'. And there are also people—whose malevolence and evil inclination are well known indeed—who insult him and charge him with unbelief. They are either speculative theologians or Ittīhādī Sufis or masters of *dhikr* or people he has offended and slandered in an exaggerated way, may God protect him from the evil in his soul! Most of his depreciation of the most erudite, and for those who claim to be ascetics, is right and in part of it he is a *mujtahid*. His doctrine is very much forgiving towards people and he does not charge anybody with unbelief unless he has put forward a legal proof and an argument against him. He [then] says: 'This saying is unbelief and error, the person who uttered it is ignorant and has never been provided with the proof of God, perhaps he will retract it or turn to God in repentance', and he goes on saying: 'His faith is firm and he has certitude, so we will not exclude him from it except by certitude. As for he who knew the Truth but fought against it and opposed it, he is a damned unbeliever, like Iblīs'. But who is ever preserved from error in the principles [of Law] and its branches?! Of the most authoritative speculative theologians and the philosophers he says: 'They do not know Islam and the revelation brought by the Prophet—may God bless him and grant him salvation!'—and about the spiritual states of many Sufi masters he says: 'They are satanic and possessed by their own selfish passions. Attention should then be given to the [Sufi] *shaykh*'s following of the Book and the Sunna, to his nature, his adoration of divinity and his learning. If so, his spiritual state is

⁴⁵ Ibn Taymiyya's unpopular stands on divorce were surely one of the major causes of his disgrace. Volume XXXIII of *MF* gathers his *fatāwā* on these issues.

correct and his ecstatic revelation [fol. 75r] divine.⁴⁶ One of them⁴⁷ is given vision[s] from the *jinn*, so he is informed about transcendental secrets in order to tempt him. On this topic he has many writings and about this instance or that. Were they collected together they would comprise some extraordinary volumes. More than one person affected by demonic epilepsy was healed just by threatening the *jinn*, and in this types and separations happened to him.⁴⁸ He did little other than recite quranic verses and say: 'If you do not go away from this man affected by epilepsy, or this woman, then we will treat you according to the rule of law and we will treat you according to what is ordained by God and His Messenger'.

I have studied with him the section of Ibn 'Arafa more than once. And the traditionist Amīn al-Dīn al-Wānī⁴⁹ gathered forty traditions provided by him on the authority of forty *shaykhs*. He performed the pilgrimage to Mecca in 691, studied many prophetic traditions by himself and taught the *Ghaylāniyyāt* in public.⁵⁰ Among the works he audited is the *Mu'jam al-akbar* by al-Ṭabarānī,⁵¹ which he learned from al-Burhān al-Darajī,⁵² with his licence from Abī Ja'far al-Ṣaydalānī⁵³ and others. Then they took possession of his *fatwā* on travelling to visit the graves of the Prophets, and that travelling and setting out for that purpose are prohibited according to words of the Prophet—peace be upon him: 'Do not set out but towards three mosques...'⁵⁴ although he had acknowledged that visiting [them] without [expressly] setting out [for that purpose] is a pious deed.⁵⁵ Because of this matter, they slandered him, and asked for a legal opinion against him, and a group of people wrote concerning

⁴⁶ The whole Arabic passage is confusing. Admittedly, Ibn Taymiyya is here talking in general terms, calling the reader to draw a distinction between good and bad patterns of Sufism, orthodox and unorthodox practices.

⁴⁷ An existing *shaykh* is here taken as an *exemplum* of orthodox Sufism. The person in question is Aḥmad ibn Abd al-Raḥmān al-Maqdisī al-Ḥanbalī (d. 697/1296–97), who was an acknowledged pious scholar, renowned as a healer and for his interpretations of dreams and visions. Despite the unorthodox character of his knowledge and practice, Ibn Taymiyya shows appreciation for his allegiance to the Book and the Sunna which is the inescapable condition to which all Muslims must submit, Sufis included, to be good believers. For the biography of Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Maqdisī cf. al-Ṣafādī, *Wāfi*, VII, 48–51, where the same words about the *jinn* possessing him here quoted are reported on the authority of al-Dhahabī and Ibn Taymiyya (p. 49, ll. 6–7). See also Ibn Rajab, *Dhayl*, II, 336–8 and al-Kutubī, *Fawāt*, I, 87–8. Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Practice*, 132.

⁴⁸ Literal translation of the Arabic (*wa-jarā la-hu fī dhālika alwān wa-fuṣūl*). The meaning of the passage is ambiguous, one plausible interpretation may be: 'and in doing this all sorts [of things] and partitions [of the *jinn* from the body of the epileptic?] happened to him (i.e. to the *shaykh*)'.

⁴⁹ Not identified.

⁵⁰ A collection of traditions transmitted by Abū Ṭālib ibn Ghaylān (m. 440/1048–49). Cf. Ibn al-Imād, *ShDh*, II, 265.

⁵¹ It is usually called *al-Mu'jam al-kabir* and it is quoted also by Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī, *Uqūd*, 3. Abū l-Qāsim al-Ṭabarānī (d. 360/971) was a Ḥanbalī traditionist, author of three famous *Ma'ājim* which were recommended texts in the education of any good *faqih* and *muḥaddith*. About al-Ṭabarānī see M. Fierro, art. 'al-Ṭabarānī' in *EP*, X, 10–11.

⁵² Ibrāhīm ibn al-Darajī (d. 681/1282–83), a Damascene Hanafī scholar and an important transmitter of *al-Mu'jam* by al-Ṭabarānī. Cf. Ibn al-Imād, *ShDh*, V, 373.

⁵³ Abū Ja'far al-Ṣaydalānī (d. 603/1206–07): a renowned traditionist of his time. For a short biographical notice see Ibn al-Imād, *ShDh*, V, 10–11.

⁵⁴ Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-jāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. L. Krehl and W. T. H. Juynboll (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1862–1908), *K. al-Ṣalāt fī Masjīd al-Makka wa-l-Madīna* (20), bāb 1 and 6; *K. Jazā' al-Ṣayd* (28), bāb 26. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. 'Abd al-Bāqī (Cairo: al-Bābī l-Ḥalabī, 1955–56) *K. al-Hajj* (15), nn. 415, 511, 512. Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad*, ed. Būlāq (Cairo: al-Bābī l-Ḥalabī, 1313H.), II, pp. 234, 238, 278, 501; III, pp. 7, 45, 52, 53, 64, 71, 77, 78, 93; VI, pp. 7, 398.

⁵⁵ If we believe Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī (*Uqūd*, 331), the *fatwā* on *ziyārat al-qubūr* on which basis Ibn Taymiyya was imprisoned in 726 (1326) had been written much earlier (17 years before); it was then used by his adversaries to attack Ibn Taymiyya after the troubles caused by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya in Jerusalem. It is reported that, while preaching in the Holy City, the famous pupil of the Hanbalī jurist urged his audience not to set off and visit expressly the Prophet's grave as according to his master's doctrine (cf. al-Jazarī, *Hawādith*, II, 111–12). The *fatwā* can be found in *MF*, XXVII, 182–92 and Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī, *Uqūd*, 331–40.

the issue that the error of attributing imperfection to prophecy must be stopped. On this basis he was accused of unbelief. Several people issued a legal opinion according to which in this matter he made the mistake of the *mujtāhidīn* [fol. 76v], which they forgave, whereas [another] group agreed with him. But the matter was exacerbated, so he was made to go back to a hall in the Citadel, where he remained for some twenty months. The situation deteriorated to such an extent that he was forbidden to write and read. They left him neither a notebook nor ink. He remained for months in that condition, so he devoted himself to Quran recitation and would go on reciting it from beginning to end three or more times. And he would spend the night in prayer, worshipping his Lord until he died.

I rejoiced for him at this end because there was no greater pleasure for him than writing science and composing books, and he had been deprived of his sweetest distraction—may God be compassionate with him. People were extremely surprised, as they did not know that he was ill and they grieved for him. His relatives and his intimates visited him. People thronged at the gate of the Citadel and at the Mosque to such an extent that it was like Friday prayers, more or less. In the Citadel Ibn Tamām⁵⁶ prayed for him, in the Mosque it was the preacher and outside of the town it was his brother, Zayn al-Dīn.⁵⁷ The Mosque was overcrowded, people followed the bier from the four gates of the town carrying him on their heads. It was estimated that some sixty thousand people were there, and fifteen thousand women in the street [who] wept and grieved for him all the more. He was buried in the Sufi cemetery beside his brother, the imam, Sharaf al-Dīn b. ‘Abd Allāh.⁵⁸ People paid visits to his grave and he was seen in a number of good dreams. A group celebrated him in elegies.

His death fell in the middle of Monday night, 20 Dhū l-Qa‘da, of the year 728—may God forgive him, amen. He lived sixty-seven years and [some] months. He had black hair, a little greyed beard, he was a man of medium height, with a loud voice, a fair skin and big eyes. He was thrifty in dressing and in his turban, he always had short hair. None of his senses deteriorated except for one eye which dimmed a little.

May God be compassionate with him, and be pleased with him and with us by His blessing. May He forgive us on his behalf and may He honour him!

⁵⁶ The accounts of his death usually report a certain Muḥammad ibn Tamām al-Sāliḥi l-Hanbalī as having prayed for him (Ibn Kathīr, *BN*, XIV, 136; al-Jazarī, *Ḥawādith*, II, 307; Ibn Rajab, *Dhayl*, II, 406; al-Kutubī, *Fawāt*, I, 75...).

⁵⁷ Zayn al-Dīn ibn Taymiyya (d. 747/1346–47), one of his three brothers. His biographical notices tell us that, very much devoted to his brother’s cause, he voluntarily sequestered himself in prison with Ibn Taymiyya in Alexandria and Damascus to assist him. Cf. Ibn Ḥajar, *DK*, II, 200 and Ibn Ibn al-‘Imād, *ShDh*, VI, 152.

⁵⁸ Sharaf al-Dīn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Taymiyya (m. 727/1326–27), he had died when Ibn Taymiyya and Zayn al-Dīn were in prison. It is reported that they both prayed for their brother Aḥmad from the prison in the Citadel. Cf. Ibn Rajab, *Dhayl*, II, 382–4.